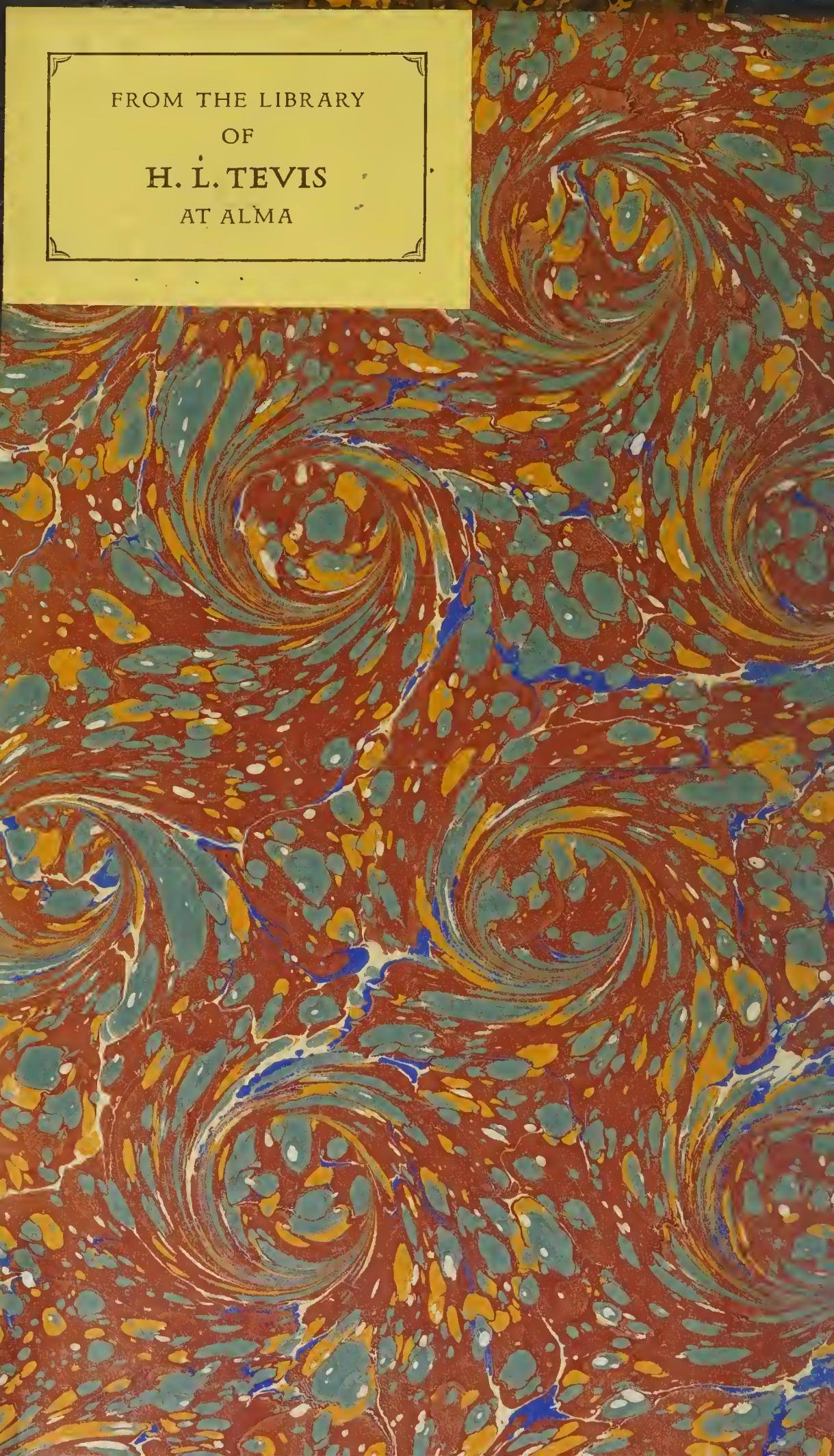
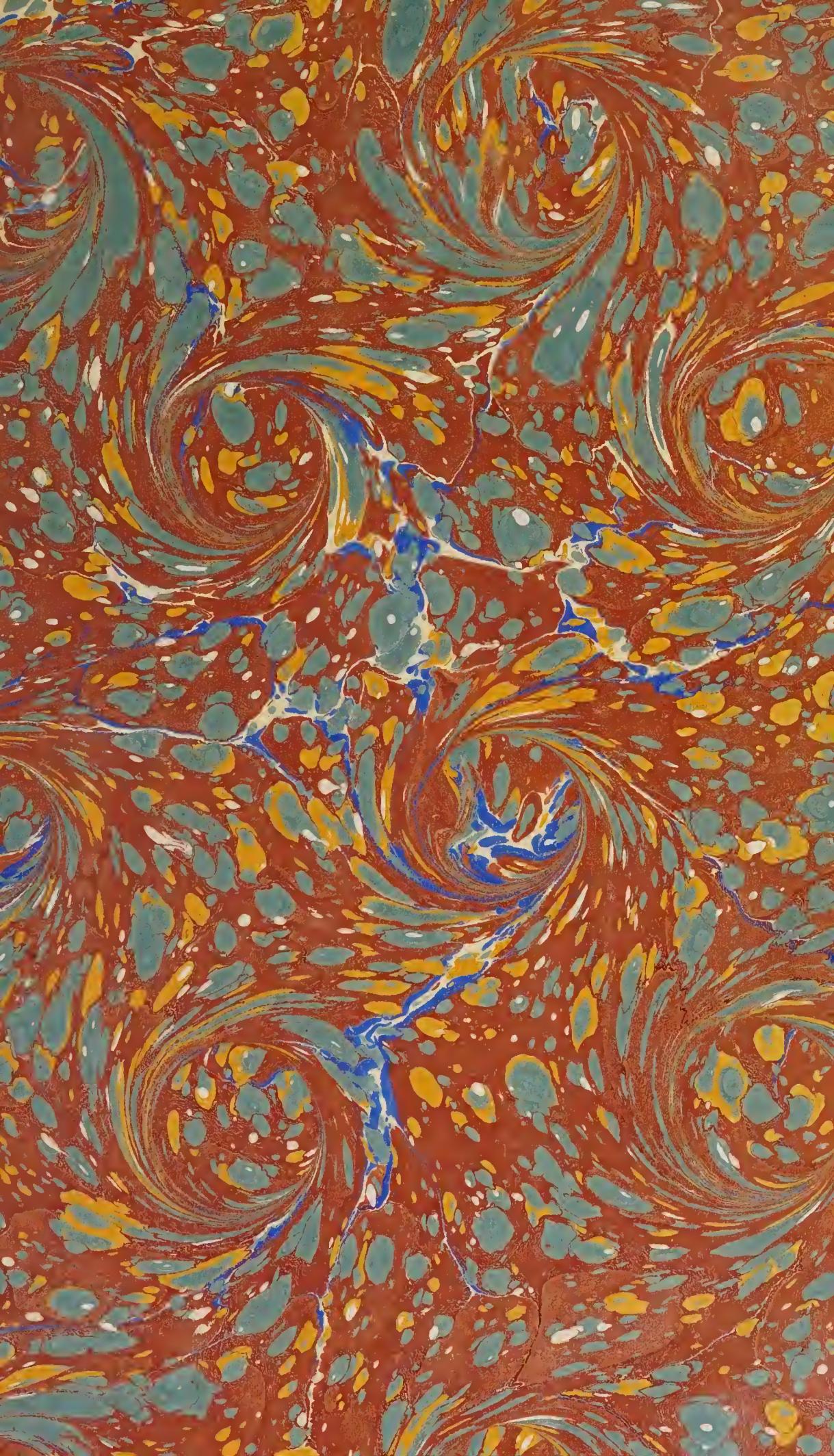


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"Dramatic subjects are here treated from an original and enlightened stand-point. The letterpress is highly meritorious."—*Bolton Weekly Guardian*.

"The Theatre is a most acceptable monthly 'bill of the play' and one which will do a great deal to raise the stage still higher and to place the lives of actors generally more truthfully, and, therefore, more fairly, before the world."—*Bridlington Free Press*.

"Presents all the conveniences of a theatre at home, and without the discomfort incident on change of weather, and extremes of heat and cold, dust or damp."—*Brighouse and Rastrick Gazette*.

"This magazine is one of the most pleasant and readable that has come under our notice for some time. The contributors are all men of position in the literary or theatrical world, and much discretion is shown in the selection of the contents . . . Varied phases of literature are represented,—the thoughtful and argumentative, the critical, the light and amusing, the imaginative, and the poetical. We welcome *The Theatre* more and more as the months roll round. Those who read between the lines fancy they see that it aims not only to amuse but to instruct and educate upon matters theatrical."—*Brighton Guardian*.

"The Theatre supplies a public want, and does so with discretion and good taste."—*Brighton Herald*.

"A well-digested compendium of the history of the stage, dramatic and lyric. There is no padding here, but genuine aid to a proper appreciation of the progress and the drawbacks to advancement which characterise the modern theatre."—*Brighton Standard*.

"The portraits are splendid examples of what is called the Woodbury-type process, being remarkably sharp and clear, as well as possessing a softness and delicacy of tone very grateful to the eye."—*Brighton Times*.

"Varied, well written, and apposite, the articles are calculated to meet with the respect and consideration of all interested in the stage."—*Buxton Chronicle*.

"One of the most interesting, well got-up, and cheapest of our monthly periodicals."—*Buxton Journal*.

"No magazine has gone more rapidly to the front during the past twelve months than *The Theatre*. Starting with the novelty (now followed by several other magazines) of producing a cabinet photograph of theatrical celebrities, and supported by a brilliant staff of writers, *The Theatre*, originally intended for the theatrical world alone, has become, by dint of spirited management, a popular monthly magazine."—*Chester Chronicle*.

"The Theatre is unquestionably the representative organ of the stage. It is ably edited, and may be consulted with advantage by the playwright, the lessee, the actor, and all classes of the playgoing public."—*Clifton Chronicle*.

"It must be a matter of wonder to some how two beautiful photographs and more than 64 pages of attractive letterpress can be given for the small sum of one shilling."—*Cork Constitution*.

"The contents will be found interesting even by those who are not particularly stage-struck."—*Coventry Herald*.

"The Theatre is calculated to materially improve the status of that profession whose members it so ably represents."—*Coventry Independent*.

"We look upon this magazine as filling a decided gap in the ranks of serial literature. Prior to its issue the stage had no worthy representative in the press."—*Derbyshire Times*.

"The Theatre admirably sustains that high reputation which was the early reward of its introductory numbers, and there is no more interesting or instructive serial issued than this, to all who love the drama and have a care or a thought for its belongings. The magazine is most ably conducted, and is uniformly meritorious in its literary contributions and artistic embellishments."—*Doncaster Chronicle*.

"The tone throughout is high-class, calculated to do as much to raise the stage as many of its representative prints are to lower it. . . . Vigorous and unrelenting in its treatment of the abuses of the stage and such subjects."—*Doncaster Reporter*.

"The matter and tone of the magazine are in all respects unexceptionable. In a literary sense its merits are undeniable, and its editorial arrangements are such as to artistically combine interesting variety with harmonious completeness."—*Dorset Daily Chronicle*.

"This periodical is not of the stage stagey, and is not redolent of the green-room and orange-peels. It is equally adapted for the amateur, the professional, and playgoer."—*Dover Chronicle*.

"To those who take any interest whatsoever in stage matters, *The Theatre* will be the most welcome of the magazines."—*Dublin Zoo*.

"Deserves extensive support."—*Dundee Evening News*.

"Less bulky than some of its shilling contemporaries, it has the advantage over them that all its articles are eminently readable, both in style and in the general interest which attaches to their subjects. The paragraphs which give all the events and gossip of the theatrical world, are, for choice and piquancy, as free from hollow nuts as anyone will find who 'bids for news' in that fascinating form."—*Durham County Advertiser*.

"If this magazine could but find its way more generally among those people who look upon the theatre as an unclean thing, we feel sure it would do much towards clearing away the mists of prejudice which have so long hidden the good points of the stage. The articles are well and vigorously written."—*English Lakes Visitor and Keswick Guardian*.

"The Theatre is to be commended for its zeal for the honour of the profession which it so ably supports."—*Fifeshire Journal*.

"The Theatre having taken up vacant ground, has so thoroughly fulfilled its mission that it has left no room for competitors."—*Glasgow Evening News*.

"Devoted mainly to dramatic affairs, and boasting a staff of popular writers who ought to make the fortune of any periodical. The dramatic criticisms are written with impartial ability, as different as possible from the slimy puffs or vindictive slatings which generally disfigure the theatrical 'notices' in the daily papers."—*Gloucester Journal*.

"It would probably help to remove many prejudices in regard to the stage if those who now fight shy of the theatre were to read this well-conducted periodical."—*Gravesend Reporter*.

"No institution of the country is more admirably represented in the periodical press than the one which finds its chief literary exponent in *The Theatre*. The news paragraphs are prepared by one who possesses sub-editorial tact in its very highest development; from first to last we do not discover a line in his department that is not readable. The tone has invariably been not only wholesome, but even elevated—more so, truth to tell, than that of some of the magazines which call themselves religious."—*Greenock Telegraph*.

"Deserves to be a favourite with all patrons of the drama."—*Hampshire Advertiser*.

"The Theatre again takes its place as one of the smartest, brightest, and most readable of our monthlies. It has not a single uninteresting page, but from first to last teems with clever sketches from the pens of some of the best known writers in the theatrical world."—*Hampshire Telegraph*.

"A splendid magazine, suitable for that large class who take an interest in the stage, the drama, and the literature and life which surround both. It is well printed, ably written, and thoroughly cosmopolitan."—*Hastings and St. Leonards Times*.

"An honour to the honourable profession in whose interests it is published. We have formal essays, learned criticism, sprightly tales, pleasant gossip, and most admirable photographs; and in all the numbers which have come under our notice we have observed no trace of that malice, spitefulness, or littleness, which those who know nothing about it assure us are inseparable from either side of the curtain."—*Hereford Journal*.

"Full of absorbing interest, and admirably adapted for a few hours' pleasant and profitable reading."—*Huddersfield Daily Courier*.

"A high-class publication conducted with great spirit."—*Huddersfield Weekly News*.

"The Theatre has, we believe, already achieved great favour with the public, but its high standard as a serial will be only fitly acknowledged when every reader of current literature shall have become a subscriber to it."—*Hull Bellman*.

"The editor has mustered to his side some of the principal writers to the periodical press, and the photographs of celebrities are works of art. The venture deserves to be a success."—*The Hull Packet*.

"This magazine bids fair to become the leading organ of theatrical opinion."—*Ilfracombe Chronicle*.

"For the theatrical world full of interest, and those who are not of the Green Room will get from it some idea of the world of interest there is connected with the theatre."—*Isle of Wight Advertiser*.

"Worthily fills a gap in periodical literature as a monthly magazine devoted to the drama and its exponents, whilst its attractions are sufficient to induce every support on the part of the general public. The portraits are so truthful and well executed as to be alone honestly worth more than the price paid for the whole."—*Jackson's Oxford Journal*.

"One of the best conducted and most capitally got-up of 'class magazines.'—*Leeds Express*.

"It has variety, freshness, sound criticism, gossip, and two excellent portraits. *The Theatre* cannot but exert a healthy influence both on professionals and on the public."—*Leicester Chronicle*.

"The articles are always clever, and at the same time of a chatty description; they are so general in character, that nothing pertaining to the stage is omitted; whilst the information is well posted and reliable. A better shilling's-worth is not published."—*Lichfield Mercury*.

"Deserves the patronage of all interested in the progress of dramatic art."—*Lincolnshire Chronicle*.

"Deserves well of all interested in the progress of the dramatic art. It is ably edited, and the general papers are ever of a pleasant and instructive character."—*Northampton Herald*.

"The Theatre is devoted to the interests of the drama, but we gladly recognise that it does not regard the stage as a stage on which charlatans and courtesans may run riot at their own (in)discretion."—*North of England Advertiser*.

"We may safely predict that *The Theatre* will be popular, not only with professional but also with general readers."—*Nottingham Daily Guardian*.

"*The Theatre* is, *par excellence*, the magazine of the theatrical world. The editor has at his command just such trenchant, yet humorous, pens as make the life of a serial of this character, and he directs them wisely. The scope of the magazine is not limited, including the doings at London, the Provinces, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, the Italian Cities, New York, &c."—*Preston Guardian*.

"Its chief aim is to elevate the tone of the stage and drama in every conceivable manner, and there can be no doubt that the many able papers that appear from time to time cannot fail to have a most decided and desirable effect upon all interested. One of the most alluring, pleasurable, and at the same time one of the cheapest journals ever offered to the reading public."—*Salford Chronicle*.

"Its position as a monthly *critique* on dramatic affairs is we believe unique, and it supplies a want which before its publication in this form was quite unsupplied."—*Scarborough Daily Post*.

"The matter is light and pleasant throughout, free from the technicalities of the stage and the commonplace notices that pass for criticism in some of even the higher class journals. . . . Varied and agreeable reading."—*The Southport Critic*.

"How it is possible to furnish these portraits, in addition to the interesting mass of reading contained in the magazine, is a question which we are unable to solve. We wish *The Theatre* all the success it deserves."—*South Wales Ferret*.

"*The Theatre* may be now considered fully established as the representative periodical of the English drama. It is conducted with a vigour and critical ability which cannot fail to give it authority."—*Surrey Comet*.

"This magazine, like port wine, improves with age. The papers under 'The Watch Tower' are evidently the work of master pens."—*Western Daily Mercury*.

"The magazine sustains the position it attained when it commenced, and it is unique in dealing with theatrical subjects with sufficient intelligence and ability to be interesting to persons outside what are known as theatrical circles. The contributors to the magazine are writers of acknowledged ability, and each number is admirably arranged."—*Western Daily Press*.

"Made attractive for the general reader by the introduction of two or three short tales, poems, biographical

and literary sketches, and excellent photographic portraits."—*Wigan Observer*.

"This popular magazine maintains a high standard of its criticism, and its gossip on things theatrical is bright and amusing."—*Yorkshire Post*.

"A good theatrical magazine had long been a desideratum when the one before us was first published, and the public appreciation of its merits is the testimony of its success."—*News of the World*.

"*The Theatre*, in its new form as a monthly review and magazine, promises to occupy an important and unique place in periodic literature."—*Brief*.

"*The Theatre* possesses distinctive features which should commend it to playgoers."—*The Figaro*.

"One of the brightest and most entertaining of the monthlies, and always welcome."—*Court Journal*.

"Characterised by a thorough spirit of independence and honesty in its manner of dealing with all matters connected with the dramatic world. It is edited with great care and completeness, and presents to the profession, as well as to those interested in dramatic art, a rich fund of information."—*East London Observer*.

"For the first time in its history the stage of this country is worthily represented in periodical literature."—*Man of the World*.

"A proof of the interest taken in the stage in England is the fact that a well-written monthly magazine of nearly one hundred pages can be run and made successful. As an advocate of the regeneration of the stage and as a medium for discussing everything connected therewith freely and without prejudice *The Theatre* deserves every encouragement."—*Parisian*.

"If any proof were needed of the greatly improved standing of the stage in England of late, it might be found in this magazine. With the renewed feeling that the drama is an art, and not a trade for sordid hucksters, arose a demand for a journal of the higher dramatic art. *The Theatre* is creditable to the art it seeks to represent, shows a willingness and an ability to improve, and is likely to exert an influence for good."—*New York Nation*.

"The best dramatic magazine ever issued, and ought to be in the library of every actor and manager."—*New York Spirit of the Times*.

December 20, 1879.

The Theatre.

AUGUST 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH STAGE ART.



HE inevitable law by which ebb succeeds flow, and action is followed by reaction, has rarely been more clearly illustrated than in the course taken by public opinion with regard to the company of French players which has just left the Gaiety Theatre. Happily for the pecuniary success of Mr. Hollingshead's long-projected enterprise, which was indeed practically assured before the curtain drew up for M. Got's delivering of the inaugural address, the reaction had not time to make itself

felt before the six-weeks' season was over; and, as a matter of fact, more anxiety was shown to obtain places for the later than for the earlier productions. Yet it was impossible to read much of the written comments upon these nightly performances, or to listen to the spoken verdicts of those who crowded the Gaiety lobbies, without coming to the conclusion that the tide of public opinion was on the turn. The current which had at first set in with such exaggerated force had expended its pristine energy, and the retrograde under-current was beginning to make its influence felt. As usual, excess provoked excess. The extravagant praise of gushing enthusiasm irritated not a few into extravagant censure, equally outspoken and not more discriminating. Annoyed by the reiterated assurances that Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt, in spite of her obvious lack of physique, was to be placed upon a pedestal high above any actress seen of late years on our stage, people began to protest that her style was marked by faults which would have disqualified her for association with any high-class company in either Paris or London. The awe-stricken respect with which in certain quarters all French dramatic work was treated induced violent abuse of comedies such as *Le Demi-Monde* and *Le Sphinx*; and the unwavering belief in every detail of the management of the Comédie Française caused virulent abuse to be heaped upon the heads of the *sociétaires* for the single break-down of their system which occurred at a morning

performance. Just as at first it was the fashion to murmur ecstatically “Delightful! incomparable! perfect!” at every practicable and impracticable interval in the Gaiety representation, so, later on, the babble of the crowd made itself heard in doubts “Whether there is so much in it after all,” and in the apparently candid confessions of extreme disappointment. That this should be so was, as we have said, inevitable; and it is probable that if any manager, misled by the triumphant issue of the experiment at the Gaiety, were to succeed in repeating it, he would find that the public interest in it had already burnt itself out in the fierce flame of exuberant enthusiasm.

It is, however, obvious that irresponsible opinion actuated or at any rate influenced in this manner has little intrinsic value, and carries with it little real weight. It is worth noting as the natural consequence of a certain mistaken method of attempting to win wholesale and unhesitating acceptance of the work of admirable foreign artists, instead of admitting that their achievements, like those of their rivals in this country, have to be examined in detail, and received or rejected upon their merits. But without taking any heed, on the one hand, of the too hearty appreciation which loses its critical power in its generous applause, or on the other, of the petty carping which finds fault wherever fault is sought, there is plenty of room for a dispassionate comparison of the efforts of our recent visitors with those of the players who night after night act in our midst. The distinctions between the two schools of art are broad and readily defined; having regard to the achievements of each nation in art of other kinds, it would be to the last degree surprising if we did not discover points in which the advantage was gained by either school over the other.

Touching, first of all, upon the characteristics of the Comédie Française, most generally claimed for it by those who compare our own stage unfavourably with that of our friendly neighbours, we find that they have to be accredited with keen perception of character, high command of harmonious *ensemble*, clearness of elocution, polish, and *finesse*. We are confronted with the fact that we have no renderings of classical comedy which can in completeness and all-round efficiency be named in the same day with the performances in the Rue Richelieu of plays like *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules* of Molière, *Le Menteur* of Corneille, and *Les Plaideurs* of Racine. Individual players we may have equal to the task of realising with excellent effect Trissotin and Clitandre, Cliton and Dorante, L'Intimé and Petit-Jean; but we cannot suggest any company capable of dealing with any of these comedies as a whole in the spirit and with the perfectly-balanced force of its presentation as the Théâtre Français. But, even while we are regretfully admitting thus much, we call to mind that if classical comedy has no place in the repertoire of the London theatres where it could best be understood, classical tragedy, as given at the Lyceum, has indisputable advantages over the tragedy illustrated by M. Mounet-Sully and his colleagues. Mr. Irving's heroes are natural human beings, able to touch human sympathies, where Orosmane, Oreste, and Hippolyte are at best stagey and impossible creatures, whose studied passion generally develops itself in what, with our own tragedians, we should denominate rant. Where, in the one case, we

have the longest and most trying soliloquies so rendered as to appear the irrepressible utterance of thoughts as they occur to the lonely thinker, we have, in the other, conversation which should be addressed to characters upon the stage shouted at the heads of the audience in front. The tradition which has, in one direction, proved so beneficial, has in the other done nothing but harm, except perhaps in insuring distinctness of elocution; and without hesitation it may be affirmed that tragedy as presented at the Lyceum is a higher intellectual achievement, has deeper sympathetic power, and has a far stronger hold upon popular taste than has the tragedy of the *Maison de Molière*.

Though it would be difficult to indicate any reason why what has been accomplished by one manager with classical tragedy should not be achieved by another with Shaksperean comedy, it is sufficiently clear that the success in Molière of the company headed by M. Got is due to the combination of the Conservatoire and subvention. The school has been at hand to teach the young comedians how small rôles, as well as leading ones, should be played. The guarantee has been provided against any lack of support on the part of a public possibly weary for a time of the formal productions of a bygone day. Molière can be played whether he "draws money" or not; and if Shakspere could be played under similar conditions we may rely upon it that we should soon enjoy representations of *As You Like It* and *Much Ado about Nothing* distinguished by an even excellence such as no manager can in the present state of public taste afford to secure. Even so the Comédie Française would still possess an advantage in the antiquity and state-position of its theatre; and though this advantage would not improbably be compensated by the superior freedom of individual thought and action secured under our looser *régime*, its meaning must not be forgotten. We are comparatively weak in finish and *ensemble* because none of our managers can attract to his theatre a double or treble company at a comparatively low rate of pay by the aid of the credit and social position gained by association with his undertaking. He cannot secure stability for his *troupe* by persuading its members to grant half a life-time's lease of their services; he cannot spend his time over the instruction of promising pupils, who if they make good use of their opportunities will merely shine out as stars elsewhere. Hence it comes to pass that although the general finish of the performances at the Prince of Wales's Theatre under Mr. Bancroft, and at the Court under Mr. Hare, proves elaboration of detail to be by no means beyond the reach of the English actor, this elaboration is not practically applied to any plays save those which may be reasonably expected to hit the popular fancy of the day. Granted the same conditions for dramatic art at the Lyceum, the Court, or the Prince of Wales's, and it is abundantly clear that the shortcomings discoverable either in players or in programmes designed specially with a view to long runs might readily be removed. It is quite unnecessary to recapitulate any list of our leading actors and actresses, or to pit our own performers one by one against those of M. Perrin's famous company. Taken individually, the pupils of each of the two schools have their individual merits peculiar to themselves; regarded as a company, the Comédie Française, belonging as it does to the nation,

is of necessity without a rival amongst the companies collected in England by private enterprise. The danger with us arises from the lack of valuable tradition, the absence of facilities for the technical instruction of beginners, and the temptation to managers to pursue a hand-to-mouth policy in their artistic undertakings. The deficiencies of the *Theatre Français*, and they are deficiencies which we should loudly lament if they were our own, are in spontaneity, naturalness, and individuality of style. Tradition obtains almost too much respect; and in the careful presentation of the large number of works in this wonderful *répertoire*, the maxim *ars est celare artem* is too frequently either forgotten or disregarded. Thus each has its special failings, just as each has its peculiar merits, and it is irrational as it is ungracious to exalt one at the expense of the other, or to consider that generous appreciation of our illustrious visitors is best suggested by depreciation of their English rivals and friends.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT.

THE visit of the *Comédie Française* to London has been marked by one unfortunate incident. Mdlle. Bernhardt, to whose gifts as an actress the recent prosperity of the theatre is in a very large measure due, has signified her intention to withdraw from the company. For this announcement we were hardly unprepared. The *sociétaires* of the *Comédie Française*, however much they may differ in point of popularity, stand upon one level as to remuneration, which is regulated by seniority. Mdlle. Bernhardt receives less than many comrades of inferior claims, although, as has often been proved, her individual attraction is greater than that of all the other members of the troupe put together. In London this fact has been even more incontestable than in Paris. Except when she appeared, the chance-playgoer might always reckon upon obtaining a good seat in the theatre. For all her performances in London she has received about £150, a little less than the sum paid to Mdlle. Reichemberg during the same period. It is hardly surprising, then, that Mdlle. Bernhardt should deem herself unfairly treated at the *Comédie Française*, especially as any American or continental manager would engage her for at least three months at £100 a night. For some time past, too, her place at the theatre has not been a bed of roses. The fame she enjoys has excited considerable jealousy behind the scenes; and a clique—headed, it is alleged, by M. Febvre—has been formed against her as cliques were formed against distinguished players in times gone by. If of late she has made any progress in the estimation of Parisian playgoers it has been in the teeth of obstacles deliberately thrown in her way. Finally, a section of the French press, either influenced by this clique or perceiving that “society” is just now disposed to disparage her, have turned against her with remarkable virulence. From the first week of

her stay in London there was a noble rivalry amongst about half-a-dozen Parisian journalists as to who should assail her with the greatest effect. They decried her abilities, made sport of her peculiarities, ascribed to her a vulgar craving for notoriety, and reprehended her practice of giving performances out of the theatre for money as calculated to lower the dignity of the Comédie Française. They even alleged that she went in male attire every day to the exhibition of her sculpture and paintings in Piccadilly—in other words, allowed herself to be seen by anybody for a shilling—and that mere caprice led her to disappoint the audience which assembled at the Gaiety on the 20th June. Thesé and other lies were greedily swallowed, and M. Albert Wolff warned her that on her return she would meet with an unfriendly reception. It is hardly surprising that in such circumstances Mdlle. Bernhardt should be induced to give in her resignation.

It remains to be seen whether she will adhere to her present intention. By doing so she would incur a considerable loss and place herself at a great disadvantage. The *sociétaires* of the Comédie Française are under an engagement for twenty years. They may go away at the end of half that term, but only after making two applications within a year for leave to retire. Even in that case they would forfeit the sum standing to their credit in the reserve fund. Now, Mdlle. Bernhardt has not been a *sociétaire* more than seven years, and it accordingly follows that the committee can take no cognizance of her resignation. If she declines to reappear at the Comédie Française she will be mulcted in damages and prevented from playing anywhere in France. Happily, however, there is reason to hope that the authorities will have no occasion to proceed to such extremities. M. Got, the *doyen* of the company, is so convinced of her value that on hearing of her resignation he declared the Comédie would have a hard time of it without her, and her secession would be followed by that of M. Maubant and others of her comrades. In order to avoid a disaster to the Comédie, therefore, it will probably be deemed necessary to make such alterations in the regulations of the theatre as will enable her to obtain a fair remuneration for her services. It is scarcely just that an actress who can fill the Comédie Française to repletion, and has to bear the additional expenses entailed by a high position, should receive a stipend of only about £400 per annum when a player in whose name there is little or no magic has more by reason of seniority. It was only by remaining a *pensionnaire* that Rachel was able to make special terms with the management. It may be urged that as Mdlle. Bernhardt became a *sociétaire* with her eyes open she ought to abide by her agreement, but at that time she had given few indications of the talent she soon afterwards displayed. In 1871 Mr. Irving went to the Lyceum Theatre for three years at a salary proportionate to the position he had then attained; what would have been thought of Mr. Bateman if, after the production of the *Bells* and *Charles I.*, he had insisted upon the literal fulfilment of the bond? The question of remuneration disposed of, Mdlle. Bernhardt, we suppose, would not hesitate to re-enter the Maison de Molière. In two or three years she will be at liberty to leave the Comédie without forfeiting her right to play elsewhere in France. The clique against her, the existence of which is a

proof that even the *Enfants de Molière* are without the fine *esprit de corps* usually ascribed to them, may prejudice the authorities against her, but will hardly succeed, we should think, in weakening her footing in the theatre. The idea that she has compromised the dignity of the *Comédie Française* by her proceedings in London will not hold water very long. If there was anything discreditable in her playing at private houses for money the blame should fall upon the rules under which she is denied an adequate return for what she does at the theatre; and in exhibiting her pictures for sale she was only doing in effect what Royal Academicians and other painters do every year. The assertion that she ever wore male costume in London is simply untrue. It was not from caprice that she disappointed an audience, but merely because, by an error such as the best of us are liable to, she miscalculated her strength so far as to give a brief performance on the previous night. Before her detractors in the company accuse her of lowering the *prestige* of the *Comédie* they should ask themselves whether they have always borne it carefully in mind. Is it worthy of a member of the *Maison de Molière* to join a clique against a variously-gifted fellow-worker and leave albums on English actors with a note requesting the favour of a purchase?

A few more words as to the manner in which *Mdlle. Bernhardt* has been treated by the press of both Paris and London during her stay with us. The systematic misrepresentation to which she has been exposed is not to be exclusively ascribed to the influence of the clique we have referred to. In her case the "honeymoon of criticism" is over. "Next to the pleasure of running a man down," the author of *Lalla Rookh* once wrote, "the critics like nothing so much as the vanity of writing him up; but once up, and fixed there, he is a mark for their arrows ever afterwards." This is the position in which *Mdlle. Bernhardt* is now placed. Formerly extolled to the skies, her genius is now persistently underrated, and attacks upon her personal character are neither few nor far between. Never, perhaps, has the rowdyism of one section of the French press been more signally displayed. Not content, as we have seen, with turning her sufficiently obvious eccentricities into ridicule, they have deliberately concocted stories to her discredit and misrepresented her proceedings. In the van of this holy crusade is the *Figaro*, which, to use a common but expressive phrase, has had its knife in the actress ever since it became known that she had promised to send letters from London to the *Gaulois* and another paper; and M. Francisque Sarcey, the critic of the *Temps*, is not ashamed to be seen under the same banner. Nor have some English journals set their French *confrères* a better example. They, too, have invented stories which if true would not have done her honour; and a paper which professes high regard for the good name of the theatrical profession has been guilty of the almost incredible blackguardism of prying into her private life for the sufficiently obvious purpose of gathering food for scandal. Her anonymous assailants, as Mr. Sala remarked the other day, seem to have wholly forgotten two trifling circumstances, first that she is a foreigner and a stranger amongst us, and next that she is a woman. However, *Mdlle. Bernhardt* need not quail before the storm. During her stay in London she had opportunities of

seeing an actor who has lived down even more malignant depreciation than she has experienced. Like him, she has no ordinary gifts, and by the exercise of some force of character she may achieve a similar triumph.

C A L L S.

LAST month, in the course of an article in this review on the Green-room of the Comédie Française, allusion was made to a curious custom which for many years existed in the theatres of London, Paris, and other places. Distinguished patrons of the drama were graciously allowed to sit on the stage while the performance was proceeding. In *Hamlet* and Voltaire's *Semiramis*, for example, the shades of the murdered king of Denmark and Ninus had to pass in sight of the audience through a line of spectators in wigs and laced coats and knee-breeches. It would be apart from our present purpose to dwell on the injury done to the theatre as an institution by the scandals which arose out of the presence behind the scenes of these noble Mohawks, who took their seats on the stage in the full conviction that they were persons of far greater importance in the eyes of the audience than the players themselves, who chatted gaily while scenes of the most serious interest were being represented, and who, it must be added, held a woman's good name in but slight esteem. The effect of the custom upon stage-illusion is the point to which we wish to direct attention. How under such conditions could the finest plays or the finest acting create anything like a due impression? It is a matter of wonder that the audience did not insist upon the expulsion of the intruders; but that wonder will diminish if we recall to mind that from the Restoration down to at least the middle of the last century the typical playgoer was anxious rather to kill time than be edified or moved, paid more attention to the fops at the side of the stage than to the actors, and left with no very definite notion of what he ostensibly went there to see.

Well, it will be said, we have changed all that. In the middle of the last century spectators were banished from the stage, in England by Garrick, and in France at the instance of Voltaire. The usage we have adverted to must be classed with the irrevivable usages of a benighted past. If business-like Mr. Hollingshead should endeavour to add to his receipts by letting seats on the stage at a high price—and let us not rashly assume that such a thing is impossible—the crutch and toothpicked youths who availed themselves of the special accommodation thus provided for them would, we may be certain, encounter a storm of objurgations and missiles from the indignant pit and gallery. But have we not allowed to grow up amongst us a custom as inimical to stage illusion as the appearance of spectators at the wings? The enthusiasm excited by the acting of Edmund Keau as Lucius Junius Brutus was so intense that the audience would not disperse until he had come forward and bowed, and thenceforward the practice of calling actors before the curtain, a practice of French origin, took firm root in London. This was bad enough, but worse remained behind. In course of

time the player was required to appear at the end of each act, and now he cannot have an effective exit in the middle of an effective scene without being compelled to return and bow when the performance ought to be going on. Not to multiply instances of this freak of fashion, we shall merely point out that Miss Lydia Foote and Mr. James have had to submit to it, the former after the burst of anguish with which the heroine of the *Danischeffs* learns that she is to marry Osip, and the other on the completion of his share in the "disinheriting" scene in *Our Boys*.

Enthusiasm is a very beautiful thing, but often becomes an intolerable nuisance. This truth has been exemplified by an incident which occurred during a recent performance at the Gaiety Theatre of *La Joie Fait Peur*. M. Got, who played Noel, was called at a moment when the pathetic interest of the piece was very high. He at first refused to obey the summons, but as the applause grew more urgent he came to the door as though his young mistress had called him, bowed to and entered into a brief conversation with her, and went off without looking at the audience. This silent but forcible rebuke should be laid to heart by too-enthusiastic playgoers. Has it ever occurred to them that by stopping the play until an actor has received their plaudits they diminish even their own enjoyment? The pleasure we derive from a dramatic performance materially depends upon the extent to which we are allowed to persuade ourselves that what is passing on the stage is real. The proscenium should be as a window from which actual events are witnessed. Now it would be difficult to imagine anything more inimical to this illusion than the appearance of a player immediately after a powerful scene and exit. His face necessarily wears an expression very different from that which is impressed on the minds of the audience; and others of the dramatis personæ, instead of proceeding with their parts, have to stand mute and motionless until the little ceremony is over. The practice of calling an actor before the curtain, especially between the acts, is for similar reasons objectionable, though, of course, in a minor degree. His appearance abruptly reminds us of the unreality of what we have seen, and his smiling or at any rate placid face seems to justify the remark made by Johnson when Garrick complained that conversation at the wings as he was about to go on disturbed his feelings. For the state of things we have reprehended a section of the audience is to blame. No doubt many players are delighted to have a "call" in the middle of an act or before the curtain, but those who respect their art come forward with unfeigned reluctance, and from a conviction that if they declined to do so they would give much offence. They know that the impression they have created would be more durable if the actor were not seen except when he is acting. The coldness of the occupants of the stalls and dress-circle is bad enough; the enthusiasm of the pit and gallery, if it can manifest itself in no better way than the ill-timed "calls," is considerably worse.

Portraits.

XXV.—MISS PHILLIPS.

IN one respect it is an unfortunate thing for Miss Kate Phillips that she has the good fortune to be an Englishwoman. Nature would seem to have expressly destined her to play Molière's soubrettes, those untransplantable incarnations of arch pertness, good-humoured audacity, and *bon sens populaire*. Indeed, if she were a *sociétaire* of the Comédie Française it is almost certain that she would divide the homage of Parisian playgoers with Mdlle. Samary and Madame Dinah Felix as Dorine and Toinette, as the pleasant piquancy of her Phœbe in *Paul Pry* is enough to show. The English drama, it must be confessed, is not rich in characters of the soubrette stamp, and Miss Phillips is to a large extent denied the means of exercising her talents to the best advantage. But those talents are not confined to one walk of histrionic art. In the course of her career, brief as it has been, she has played many different parts with well-deserved success. Miss Phillips belongs to the Goldney family, which settled in Wiltshire as far back as the time of Henry VII., and of which the representative in the House of Commons of the electors of Chippenham is the present head. She is a daughter of the late Mr. Phillip Goldney, of Bradleigh Hall, Essex, a mighty fox-hunter in his day. In early life, strange as it may seem, she found herself obliged to earn a living for herself, and for a time acted as a governess. This occupation found no favour in her eyes, and the applause she won in some amateur dramatic performances led her to go on the stage. Her first appearance before the public was at the Lyceum Theatre, as a page in *Chilperic*. Enamoured of her new calling, she went into the provinces for practice, returning to London in 1871 to assume a part in *Les Brigands*. From that time down to the present her progress has been very rapid, and during the last two years she has fulfilled engagements at the Prince of Wales's and Court Theatres. Her most remarkable impersonations have been Gerda in the *White Pilgrim*, Phœbe in *Paul Pry*, the Boy in *Henry V.*, Bessie Hebbethwaite in the *Unequal Match*, Jenny in the *Ladies' Battle*, and Maria in *Twelfth Night*. The last, perhaps, is the best of all. In the words of *The Times*, it "indicated a just and creditable conception of the peculiar qualities of Shakspere's humour, the expression of which seems to have been lost to our stage with the lamented loss of Mr. Compton. The performance, while animated with a full proportion of life and spirit, was yet undisfigured by any extravagance or coarseness, two most imminent and deadly foes to all who would present the characters of Shakspere's comedy." Refinement, in fact, is as conspicuous a feature in her acting as vivacity; and she now stands forward as the best soubrette on the stage. In order to save ourselves from many inquiries on the point, we may as well state at once that Miss Phillips is married, her husband being the versatile young gentleman who plays under the name of Conway.

The Round Table.

NEW AND ORIGINAL.

BY HERMAN C. MERIVALE.

OF all the arts here in England I suppose that none has suffered so much from some later developments of criticism as the poor old drama, "where all their beauty blends." It is difficult to make out to what criticism is coming. Rightly understood it is very worthy work. If I had been a writer abused by Jeffrey I should immediately have begun to reflect whether the unsavourable verdict of such a man must not of itself be very near the truth. Had I been an actor whom Hazlitt called a fool I should have retired into my shell, and thought I was one. (Which last sentence of mine a critic beholding, fell foul of my grammar, and asked if "one" meant shell. To which what could I answer but "No, fool.") But wrongly understood it is simply a puzzle. I remember a phrase of the late George Henry Lewes with which he began a criticism in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, good as all his articles were, because he was a scholar and a kindly man, and (*teste* good John Oxenford or Joseph Knight) a kindly scholar doesn't write bad criticisms. "In criticism everything depends upon the point of view;" and the point of view from which the stage is popularly regarded in England is very like what the workman in *Hard Times* called "aw a muddle." As far as I can make it out there seems to be no standpoint, no proportion whatever: those worthy artists of the Comédie Française, for instance. On my word, I believe that the English authors and actors will be making an anti-Gallican league before long, so utterly sick are they of having, on the one hand, the Gots and the Febvres and the Samarys, and on the other the Sardous and Barrières and Meilhacs, and the rest of the respectable mediocrities, perpetually "prauht" at them as something little less than divine. Why! The *Spectator* is, to my own thinking, the very best of the journals of the day, because full of scholarship and kindness both. In dealing with books it is content to interpret between the author and the public, instead of using the books as mere pegs whereon to hang "smart" things at any cost of pain to the author. This last form of journalism has of late years been growing so common that one is tempted to think that if genius has been defined as an "infinite capacity for taking trouble," criticism is coming perilously near to an infinite capacity for giving pain. What pleasure can the men find in it?—which is parenthetical. Here is the *Spectator*, which, as far as I can remember, ignores English acting, devoting special articles to the Comédie Française. M. Barré's Orgon is analysed, though it is not so good as Mr. Chippendale's

Polonius. Mdlle. Samary has half a column to herself, though she is no better a soubrette than Miss Kate Phillips. If, as it is said, Mdlle. Samary did not appear at all upon the occasion cited, it becomes very funny indeed. What is it all about? Are the actors of the Français a very good all-round company? or are they the latest edition of the twelve apostles, with power to add to their number? The true article on the subject would be called the "Decadence of the Théâtre Français," and would point out how curiously in the acting, in the pieces produced, and even in *esprit de corps* that theatre has declined since the introduction of the "Liberté des Théâtres," just as it happened in England after the abolition of the patents. Even as I write, under the Normandy apple-trees, I have under my hand an article of Francisque Sarcey, in which he places Charles Warner's Coupeau above the Frenchman's (justly I do not doubt, for he is a thorough artist) and speaks of an effect in Irving's Louis XI. as I could speak of no living French artist but Sarah Bernhardt. The point of view, if you please—the point of view?

Of course, the effect of all this upon the English stage is serious. Whether this praise of everything French, simply because it is French, is an instance of the "omne ignotum pro magnifico," or merely of the odd national habit of running ourselves down in everything, I do not know. But that it has the certain result of driving the managers more and more into mistrusting their own authors and their own judgment, and producing one "adaptation" from the French after another, is clear. "'Tis true 'tis pity: pity 'tis 'tis true." Experience teaches in vain. Rarely does an actor make a name in adaptations: rarely does a manager succeed by persevering in them. Our best and most successful managers at the Vaudeville have had the sense to produce none at all. The Prince of Wales's was made by Robertson. Yet one manager, who we are told has done all sorts of things for English art, buys M. Somebody's brilliant something to start a new career with; and another absolutely invests in a new French drama by M. Pinchbeck, or some such name, whom nobody ever heard of, before it is so much as produced in Paris! And then, right and left, we are told with damnable iteration that there are no original dramatists in England. Bah! There is no magic in writing a good play, any more than in anything else. There are plenty of dramatists, but nobody to produce their plays. I know nothing of Mr. Sydney Grundy, but I have seldom felt more sympathy than I did with a letter of his, in which he explained that he had taken to adapting, only after trying in vain to get his own plays acted, which are sure to be as much better as a man's own ideas are bound to be than his tinklings of foreign notions. "Necessity is the mother of adaptation," said a witty playwright the other day, shrugging his shoulders.

The quaint misuse of the word "original," in dramatic matters, is in itself another result of the Gallomania. The true meed of "originality," I suppose, is the highest praise that can be given to any work of art, in any line. Most certainly play-writing is the only line in which the producer calmly claims it for himself. Fancy a novelist setting forth on his title-page that he had written an "original" novel, or a painter describing his work in the catalogue as an "original" picture by So-and-so. Even the wondrous

Whistler never got so far. Yet the dramatists have been driven into this very curious form of self-assertion whenever they want to signify that they have not gone to foreign sources for their subject. Not that their asserting it is of much use. If there exists a French play with a similar title, they will be flatly accused of having used it, and at the same time rather complimented upon their ingenuity, so highly are truth and honour valued now-a-days, elsewhere as in affairs of State! One of our best authors, not long ago, having been at great pains to prove that the construction of a comedy of surprise was not an impossible feat for an Englishman, brought out one of his own, and very good it was. An American critic complimented him highly because he said it was from a French play, which the author had never heard of. I remember that I was so much moved to idle wrath by this, that I wrote to an ancient theatrical newspaper strongly on the English dramatist's side, and rashly said that the modern French drama is "all head, and no heart," which happens to be what I think; whereby I brought on my devoted head a column of "nag" as regarded myself, and "gush" about these beloved foreigners. I had cited Dumas the elder, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Musset, as genius without successors, and my answerer (as "we") appealed with tears in his pen to the sacred name of "Dennery," (citing a play which Dennery didn't happen to write); for all the world as if a French writer, to prove that Sheridan and Goldsmith had their successors, called on the shade of Fitzball or the poet Bunn. I had signed myself "Democritus," and he called me "Dramaticus," a word which cannot exist by the laws of language, as far as I know, in any language whatever; and finally, he wept so over the beauties of French art generally, that he almost tempted me to answer him, and invert my unlucky epigram in his favour. But *cui bono?* It is possible to know enough of French literature and French acting, even without a dictionary, not to be frightened by an array of names.

I hope that I shall not be accused of any personal feeling towards the critics when I say that I believe them, or at all events a section of them, to be chiefly responsible for the lack of original work, to adopt the stage phrase for a moment. I would rather call it English work. In the little that I have myself written for the theatres I have met with but few exceptions to the rule of courtesy and help. But I am sure that they are gradually driving the managers into a perfect dread of everything not "taken from the French," when they can appeal to other judgments than their own, and confidently use their favourite formula, that a piece "has money in it," simply meaning thereby that it has had, in France. That safe mode of condemnation is applied beforehand, as far as my experience goes, to every piece of English work in turn. *Alone* and *All for Her*, two successful plays in which I had the pleasure of working with my friend Palgrave Simpson (who, English though he be, knows as much about "construction" as the sainted Dennery himself), both had that sentence passed upon them, and were working out their sentences in waste-paper baskets when they were accidentally released on tickets-of-leave, "anything" being wanted, and vindicated their integrity. A four-act play which cost me much pains and thought is now in durance vile on a similar suspicion. I took it to my good

friend Scuttle, who I am sure would do anything he could for "art" or for me. He professed much admiration, and said that he could suggest no change for dramatic purposes; but he sagely added that there was "No money in it." Quoth I, or might have quoth, with the American, "Young man! never you prophesy till you know." For the formula is not a criticism, it is a prophecy. Reasons given for it might be criticisms. I on my side should be loath to prophesy that there is money in any play; but any author, after a certain experience, is justified in saying of a piece of his own that it is worthy of production. It is his business to know, as it is the manager's to superintend the production intelligently and with proper rehearsals, and the actor's to do his best for his part as written. It is very funny, in England at all events, how generally everybody seems to think that, in addition to his own business, he knows the author's so much better than the poor [man himself, especially in the "sympathetic" line, another dreadful old "Barbara celarent" which is always being thrown at one's head. That a part is "unsympathetic" means that the actor would not like to act it; wherein he is very likely right, it being his business to know. Toole would not be a sympathetic Iago. But, given the right actor, nothing that is human, however evil, is unsympathetic with an audience from Iago to Danny Mann. Here let me beg my friend and foe, the critic of the ancient theatrical newspaper, if he should see these lines, not to say that I am comparing myself to Shakspere, as he did on a previous occasion when I mentioned the Colossus. I felt crushed at first; but was consoled when I found that, on the same principle, in the next few lines of his attack, he compared himself to Lord Beaconsfield, Macaulay, and the minor prophets. He had not, in fact, mastered the difference between an instance and a comparison.

If the critics as a body would frankly discourage adaptation, on the simple principle that French fare is not the best for English palates, I believe we should soon have plenty of original English plays. I do not by that mean originality in the stage sense I have spoken of, which is oddly confined to originality of subject, probably the lowest originality of all. There is a sentence of Justin Macarthy's in his *History of Our Own Times*, which I must quote without book, saying, that "It ought to be left to children to suppose that nothing is 'original' except what, in childish phrase, we make up 'out of our own heads.' In politics, as in every field of art, the originality consists in the use we make of our materials." The playwright wants materials as much as any man, gathered no matter where; and it is the result of his being expected to make bricks without straw, if he is to be credited with "originality," that our so-called original plays are usually so thin as to enhance the value of adaptations from the French. The critics treat the dramatists just as Pharaoh did the Israelites. Once let a man spin some wire-drawn story "out of his own head" and he is called "original," no matter how stagey his characters, or how stale his treatment. Dion Boucicault, a head and shoulders taller than all the rest, is denied that credit for the *Colleen Bawn*, because he had the eye to see and the hand to fashion the materials of an old story into as original a play as ever was written. Compare the "Myles" of the story with the "Myles" of the play, and see! On the same principle, a painter who produces

an "Annunciation" should be called an adapter; and another, who imagines for himself some impossible and ghastly picnic, an "original" painter. If, then, the dramatic critics would but try "originality" by the same canon as other art-critics, the English drama would be the better for it at once; and we should be rid of second-hand editions of worthless French trash. I do not for a moment say that where the subject is of human interest and not French interest merely, and therefore fitted for good English treatment, it should not be used. But then, originally treated, it would become an original play, as Robertson's *School* did, though he derived it from Benedek's *Aschenbrödel*. Stamped as it was with his individuality, in other words, originality, in every line, what did it matter to anybody where the playwright got his *üλη*, any more than where the shipwright cuts down his? The managers, I believe, would more than find their reward in taking up this position towards English and French plays. They feel it themselves, but meet the difficulty by pleading that "the public don't care, and it doesn't matter as long as they come." Of course, if money be everything, be it so. But if there be a higher truth than that, in stage-matters as in everything, and we are all called upon not to hide even our single talent in a napkin, the plea is worth just nothing at all. The managers are the trustees of English art, for they make themselves so. And it is their "business," as it is the business of all of us, to do their duty worthily.

A BED OF ROSES.

BY ROBERT REECE.

IT was my misfortune a few months since to give offence in giving advice. The former is, perhaps, the correlative of the latter, but I merely implored a young dramatist, who had just successfully produced his first piece, to be content with his laurels, and to abandon any further intention of writing for the stage. My earnestness, however, was not unnaturally mistaken for selfishness and jealousy, and my humanity gained only a scowl, and lost a possible friend. Yet I affirm that my counsel was wise and cogent, and a day may come when my warning words may be remembered by that dramatist, and my memory (perchance) revered. I had no such friend to proffer me such good advice in my danger; would that I had been so favoured, much sorrow would have been spared to the public, more, if possible, to myself.

Will any one inform me wherein consists the seductiveness of dramatic compositions? I don't believe a man or woman (of fair culture, *bien entendu*) exists who hasn't tried a "'prentice hand" on a theatrical work. Other arts are admired and followed because of a distinct gift or bias; but *everybody* believes he or she can write a play. Of course the sensible folk fall ultimately into the proper groove and see their error timely. But how rare are these exceptions! There is a numerous tribe who will *not* see the grand

mistake. Once bitten by this terrible tarantula they dance feverish attendance upon managers, actors, *et hoc genus omne*, to their life's close; once goaded by this maddening "œstrum," they flare, and fume, and fret, and fidget, neglecting wiser impulses, heedless of consecutive failures, undeterred by rebuffs more potent than polite, till they finally expire with a protest and a rejected MS. in their hand.

Failure, which is the touchstone of all professions, does not affect the aspirant to dramatic fame. "Hope," indeed, "springs eternal in the author's breast." Most men in the pursuit of their special aim have, of course, to invoke patronage, and to be, inevitably, a little troublesome to patrons: but there is always a limit to their importunity, and sooner or later the awakening voice of Modesty cries "Halt!" Not so with him who would write for the stage. He is loud and stubborn; he is not to be denied; he is the very leech of the managers, never to be dismissed till he has sucked out an answer, favourable or the reverse. If a very young man, he is furious at not receiving a reply by return of post (including acceptance of MS.) to his offer of a play (?): and he will abate nothing of his tyrannical terms, which are invariably in excess of those of the well-tried veteran, who, I may parenthetically remark, never bullies his manager. What does it all mean? Why this craving to "come out" as a dramatist, why this heartburning, this jealousy, this want of manners in approaching a difficult art with the familiarity of a "past" profession? I gather something of an answer from my last question. It is the result of total ignorance of the miseries of dramatic authorship, even granting that authorship to be in its *best* aspect. How many people, having once experienced the grinding tortures of tooth-extraction, would covet the practical society of a dentist? Not a great number, I fancy; yet, I venture to state that there are more agonies to be endured in the prosecution of a stage-writer's craft than in that miscalled "easy chair" in that ghastly back drawing-room, which most of us know too well. Why, contrasted with the pains, jealousies, ill-tempers, back-bitings, shiftiness, unreliableness, and disappointments of a thousand types only too common in a dramatist's career, those memorable minutes with the sly gentleman who conceals the horrible forceps are Elysian. Compared with too common theatrical experiences of authors, the Inquisition becomes a Benevolent Society: we may even, as Jeremy Taylor says, "be in love with torture, and think charitably of the rack." In nine cases out of ten the course of a new play is as obstructed *ab initio* as ever was the journey of Bunyan's Christian.

A pretty bed of roses, gentlemen aspirants, is the stage! Is it nothing when commissioned to prepare a stage-work to be informed by the manager that he has engaged somebody whose introduction into your plan is to be *sine quâ non*, and a certain rock ahead? Is it a joyous and exhilarating process to read your completed drama in the green-room to stolid faces and silent indifference? Are the sulks and caprices of the "leading lady," the growls and perfunctory rehearsing of the "low comedian," the sneers and inattention of the "walking gentleman," the utter oblivion of your importance by the "extra ladies," the determined opposition of the scene-painter and master-carpenter to your designs, the

worrying and fussiness of the musical director—are *these* desirable things? Do they suggest the blossoms which adorn the garden “by Bandemeer’s stream?” If you have survived all the heartburnings, the squabbings, the misreadings, the misconstructions, wilful and undesigned,—if you have successfully combated the insane desire of the “chambermaid” to have a song and dance in your pet scene,—subject, possibly, a death by slow poisoning,—if you have ground down the manager to affording a few more feet of canvass, an extra “ground-row,” and an additional “lime-light;” if you have “squared” the carpenters, and—*horresco referens!*—if you have “settled all the costumes,” and got them not only to fit, but to be at all any way near “ready for night:” *then*—your real misery is about to begin.

I pass the delicious applications from all sides for free admissions; these are merely the buds in the bed of roses; I come at once to the superb mental, and with *sensitive* men *bodily*, torture which precedes, accompanies, and does *not* conclude with the initiatory performance. Everybody knows where you are on that night. The apparently empty box, with the play-bill displayed, as damning as the spot of blood on Blue Beard’s key, announces you. The critics, always your good friends till they are your jury, know how to alarm you by gestures, affected weariness, scornful objections, fictitious note-taking, and all the little signs of the art; meaning, I really believe, nothing but a very natural assumption of their importance, and, this is the *one* drop of relief to the miserable sufferer, honestly disposed to write their convictions.

What an unpleasant word is “conviction!” Above all, this is the great torment to the authors. The disciplined cruelty of thoughtless first-night youths, who, forgetful of all but the present joy of indulging in native English ferocity, seek offences where none are intended, discover “glosses” never preconceived, are always too ready and anxious to twist accident into a cause for reviling, and debase sentiment to the ridiculous. They are not necessarily unkind folk, these first-night jokers; but it would be well if they could endure for two hours the grinding torments of the man who, humbly trying his best, and frankly facing public opinion, is hooted, jeered, and purposely misunderstood by them solely to exhibit a very poor wit. The front rows of the pit and gallery are not precisely luxurious, but compared with the Utrecht velvet cushion on which the author sits they are a bed of roses!

A FRENCH VIEW OF MR. IRVING.

BY JULES CLARÉTIE.

THE name of M. Henry Irving must be added to the list of the greatest actors who have graced the English stage. The production of the *Bells* marks an important turning-point in his career. Down to that time he had been simply applauded; since then he has been received with enthusiasm. The truth is that he possesses considerable tragic power, joined to a perseverance and a love of his art, in which but few could have

equalled him. His reputation would be even greater than it is if he had the leisure to extend his studies and correct his faults; but, as Mr. Walter Pollock remarks, a man who has to play six or seven times a week can hardly be expected to find much time for study. England, unlike France, does not possess a national theatre.

Richelieu was the first play in which I saw M. Irving in London. Here he is superb. The performance amounts to a resurrection. The great Cardinal, lean, worn, eaten up with ambition, less for himself than for France, is admirably rendered. His gait is jerky, like that of a man shaken by fever; his eye has the depth of a visionary's; a hoarse cough preys upon that feeble frame. When Richelieu appears in the midst of the courtiers, when he flings his scorn in the face of the mediocrity that is to succeed him, when he supplicates and adjures the vacillating Louis XIII., M. Irving endows that fine figure with a striking majesty.

What a profound artist this tragedian is! The performance over, I was taken to see him in his dressing-room. I found him surrounded by portraits of Richelieu. He had before him the three studies of Philippe de Champaigne, one representing Richelieu in full face, and the others in profile. There was also a photograph of the same painter's full-length portrait of the Cardinal. Before playing Louis XI. again, M. Irving studied Commines, Victor Hugo, Walter Scott, and all who have written of the bourgeois and avaricious king, who wore out the elbows of his *peurpoint de ratine* on the tables of his gossips, the skindressers and shoemakers. The actor is an adept in the art of face-painting, and attaches great importance to the slightest details of his costume.

M. Irving is as agreeable off the stage as he is upon it. His dressing-room, with the pictures it contains and the hospitality which awaits visitors thereto, reminds one of the *loge artistique* which the novel of Madame Sand, "Pierre qui Roule," or the famous drama of Alexandre Dumas, *Kean*, presents to the imagination. In this case, however, we must not add the second title of the play referred to, *Désordre et Génie*. In the society of M. Irving you feel under the inspiration of a lettered artist and gentleman.

I asked him what other historical personage he would like to represent, what face he, who excelled in what I call stage-resurrection, would wish to revive. He reflected a moment, his countenance assuming a thoughtful expression. "Français ou Anglais?" he at length asked. "Français ou Anglais; peu importe," I replied. "Eh bien!" he said after another short pause, "je serais heureux de créer un Camille Desmoulins." He has, indeed, the energetic type and the *finesse* of the men of the eighteenth century. With his long dark hair and *spirituel* smile he would look the part to the life. There may be more good nature in his face than was the case with the malicious writer of the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*; he would be rather the Camille of the *Vieux Cordelier*. But the ill-success of the *Camille Desmoulins* brought out in Paris last year has discouraged him from attempting the character. He would prefer to represent André Chénier.

M. Irving's literary and subtle mind leans to psychological plays, plays which, if I may so express myself, are more tragic than dramatic. He is

the true Shaksperean actor. *Richelieu*, a work of but little value and false to history, acquires vitality in his hands ; he draws it up to his own level. The same is the case with the *Bells* and the *Lyons Mail*. Mathias has the deep remorse of a Macbeth ; the destiny which governs Hamlet weighs over the head of Lesurques. How great was the pleasure which the performance of *Hamlet* afforded me ! For a literary man it is a source of real enjoyment. Mr. Irving, as manager of the Lyceum, spends more than £3,000 a month to do things on an adequate scale. His theatre is the first in London. He would like to make it a sort of Comédie Française, as he would like to found a sort of Conservatoire to afford young English artists the instruction they stand so much in need of.

I return to *Hamlet*. The spectre appears with effects of electric light under the stars. The interior of the palace, with its Roman columns, the flags suspended from the arches, the raised throne and the tiger skins which lie about it, and, lastly, the taste and variety of the costumes, bring to mind some of the pictures from the easels of Alma-Tadema and Laurens. The courtiers bow to the King ; Polonius bends under the weight of age ; the guards are in mail. In the midst of these splendours Hamlet appears, superb, pale, borne down by a great sorrow. Mr. Irving is admirable in the play and death scenes ; in the latter it seems as though he saw his father again in the depths of the infinite. The scene of the burial of Ophelia—the representative of whom, Miss Ellen Terry, would be taken by one for a pre-Raphaelite apparition, for a living model of Giovanni Bellini—is put on the stage with remarkable completeness. Here, again, is a picture which Laurens might have painted. I have never seen anything so deeply, tragically true.

In *Louis XI.* M. Irving has been adjudged superior to Ligier. Dressed with historical accuracy, he is admirable in the comedy element of the piece and the chief scenes with the Monk and Nemours. The limelight projected like a ray of the moon on his contracted face as he pleads for his life excited nothing less than terror. The hands, lean and crooked as those of a Harpagon—the fine hands whose character is changed with each of his rôles, aid his words. And how striking in its realism is the last scene, representing the struggle between the dying king and his fate !

In a word, I have been much struck by the beautiful acting of M. Irving. I hope that he will be induced to play in Paris. In Shaksperean parts he would create a sensation—would exercise a powerful influence upon many men. It would be curious to see him represent Desmoulins or Chénier in Paris, a piquant thing to be present at the evocation of a French personage by a great English tragedian.

THEATRICAL COSTUME.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

TO compile a history of theatrical costume from the days, when ecclesiastics willingly lent their most gorgeously embroidered copes and stoles to deck the actors, who personated the supreme sacred characters

in the religious mysteries of the middle ages, up to the present era, would require a volume, or even more than one—interesting, no doubt, and infinitely amusing in passing through the period of the Grand Monarque, so brilliant in hoops and spangles and gold fringes and monstrous feathers; but such a history is beyond the scope of *The Theatre*. A pictorial record, however, of the gradual progress of art and research and taste in stage illustration of historical costume in England, may be gathered, to a certain extent, from the gallery of the well-known Garrick Club.

The club is distinguished among all other clubs, in this or any other country, by the extensive collection of the portraits of English actors and actresses, which decorate its walls from hall to garret; and a passing survey of these pictures will afford a small history of the rise in this country from the absurd, preposterous, and ludicrous attempts at adornment, in past times, to the correctness and actuality of the present day.

It is not the province of this paper to notice the many portraits of actors and actresses, singly or in groups, in the costume of the period, in which the play was written and performed. It need only be remarked that they would serve as admirable models for the dresses of any artists, who are called on to perform parts in the old comedies of the past century. A notable example of such an advantage to the actors and actresses of the present day is to be found in the picture of the screen scene from *The School for Scandal*, in which the exponents of the characters in the original cast—King as Sir Peter Teazle, Smith (Gentleman Smith, as he was called) as Charles Surface, Palmer as Joseph, and Mrs. Abington as Lady Teazle—are depicted in their original dresses, which are correct dresses of the period. It would be very praiseworthy in any artists of the present day, who may be acting these parts, if they would study and adopt these costumes, instead of the over-done and tawdry dresses of velvet, satin, gold lace, and embroidery in which they are now accustomed to appear.

In the Garrick Club Garrick must naturally take precedence. It will therefore be as well to note the gradual advance (such as it was) towards correctness of costume in this great actor. One of the first pictures, which would strike the visitor to the theatrical gallery of the club, would be that of Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The picture is a fine Zoffany. But the first impression conveyed will be one of ridicule, and can only elicit a smile, if not a laugh, from the spectator. It represents the scene in which Lady Macbeth has snatched the daggers from the hands of her conscience-stricken husband. The attitude of Garrick is awkward, constrained, almost ludicrous, and conveys a feeling of disappointment in the powers, or at least the style, of such a celebrated actor. But it is with the costume that we have to deal. Macbeth is attired in a gorgeous Court suit of the day. He wears a richly-embroidered green coat, with heavy cuffs and ruffles, red waistcoat and breeches, white silk stockings, and large square-toed shoes with heavy buckles. His head is surmounted by a powdered wig, with enormous lateral sausage curls. Mrs. Pritchard is not behind her compeer of the period. She is decked out in an overwhelming hoop, covered by a brilliant satin robe, with the usual exuberant adjuncts of the period; and her head is surmounted by a powdered

wig of appalling dimensions, crowned by a smart clump of feathers. It is very obvious that in these times the most costly and extravagant Court suits of the day were looked on as the correct costume of kings and queens and other mighty personages.

In the same room is a portrait of the same actor, with Mrs. Cibber—another excellent Zoffany—as Jaffier and Belvidera in *Venice Preserved*. Here the dresses are of the same fashion, although of plainer material, and with less gorgeous embroidery than those of the thane and his future queen, as obviously befitting the obseurer Venetian gentleman and lady. But the former still wears his square-cut coat and shoes and buckles, and the latter her inevitable expansive hoop; and both have their heads fashionably powdered. By the way, it is difficult for a modern mind to understand how Belvidera could have gone mad, and fainted, and died, in her balloon-like skirt, to say nothing of the monstrous edifice of powdered hair. Truly, the *finesse* of art in those times must have gone far beyond our dull modern comprehensions. The aetresses of the present day have learned to manage their trains with more or less of adroitness; but how to indulge in the ecstasy of passion in an enormous hoop would probably be a puzzling feat to them.

In following the pectorial career of Garrick we find that he at last discarded his traditional Court suit for heroes, and made a spurious effort at adopting a befitting costume. His Richard the Third is obviously an attempt in this direction; but in the eyes of any man in the slightest degree conversant with historical costume the whole dress is a gross and ludicrous anachronism. In the heavy crimson velvet overcoat trimmed with ermine, the slashed trunks, the equally slashed and puffed sleeves, the buff boots turned down just below the calf, the velvet cap with towering ostrich feathers, there is but a sorry presentment of Riehard as he lived. This costume, however, was obviously considered a most correct and satisfactory innovation; since it is copied, in almost every particular, in the portraits of Cooke and even of Edmund Kean, in the same character. If difference there be, it consists mainly in the increasing height of the towering ostrich feathers.

One curious characteristic of this period of absence of any research in correct costume, and even of utter indifference to it, is the persistence of all the leading actors of the time to dress Hamlet in a black velvet suit of the day, and with well-powdered wig. Thus appears Henderson, with Mrs. Barry as the Queen, in the most gorgeous of hooped gowns, and lofty, powdered edifice of hair. Here again he is with Wilson, as Polonius, trim and correct in black velvet suit, dainty muslin cravat, and sweet lace *jabot*—Wilson wearing an enormous sausage-curled powdered wig of the pattern, which seems to be called on the stage “a Midas-wig,” and in the “old man” attire of the time. In another similar picture he may be found with Ross, as Hamlet. He, too, is similarly attired in a black velvet suit of the time; but wears his powdered wig “with a difference;” inasmuch as, beneath the prim and well-curled upper part, falls an abrupt avalanche of straight powdered hair, to denote probably the dishevelled condition of Hamlet’s mind. It must be remarked, too, that all the full-length portraits of the actors of this period, in the part of Hamlet, exhibit their breeches un-

buttoned at the knee on one leg, with one black silk stocking pushed half down the calf, in due conformity with a portion of the text of the part.

Garrick's attempt at some species of costume, which in spite of its blatant anachronism may be looked on as a laudable innovation, seems to have induced other actors to make similar attempts. In a large picture with portraits of Powell, Bensley, and Smith as the leading personages, in *King John*—it is difficult to discover which is which—the three actors are depicted in what, as far as present knowledge goes, were called “Spanish shapes.” The dresses are “parlous,” fine in slashed trunks and sleeves, and Elizabethan ruffs round the neck; and they were probably considered as most correct in every particular. Palmer, and Bensley also, in a scene from *Cymbeline*, represented as slashing furiously at each other with property stage rapiers, are beautifully decked—the one in the then traditional “Spanish shape,” the other in cloth surtout, heavily trimmed with fur, cloth pantaloons, and russet boots. These gentlemen, however, have not yet discarded the thickly-powdered hair.

The first attempt at anything like correctness of costume, to judge from this gallery of portraits, was made by John Kemble, in enacting the part of Cato in Addison's tragedy of that name. He is represented in a white tunic, more or less of a Roman form; but even here, to use the words of Sheridan, in *The School for Scandal*, “the head is modern, but the trunk antique.” The “Kemble” age was obviously famous for its innovation in the way of a proper style of costume; although we cannot say much for Charles Kemble as Macbeth. He appears in tartan kilt and scarf, in an exaggeratedly “stagey” attitude; but he bears a far greater resemblance to the traditional Highlander before the snuff-shops of the period, than to the Macbeth as attired according to modern lights. Nor, with all respect for the great actress, can we do otherwise than smile at the appearance of Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth, “in a short-waisted, black-velvet gown, with light-red scarf on her shoulders, and head surrounded by a white-muslin kerchief, neatly tied under her chin.” Nor can we award any prize for correctness to Mrs. Charles Kemble, as “Patie,” in *The Gentle Shepherd*, attired, as she is, in a tightly-fitting tartan coat, set off with white breeches, and exquisite white silk stockings.

But, leaving the Kemble family, it may be as well to return to the extravagant attempts at costume made by some of their predecessors, and even by their contemporaries or successors. “Walk up, ladies and gentlemen!” The show-man's wand is ready. Here you may see Mrs. Ward as the Roman Octavia, in full hoop, gown overladen with extravagant ornaments, and powdered edifice of hair! Here, again, Mr. Farren as Orestes, in slashed breeches of the inevitable “Spanish shape” type, with a splendid mediæval breastplate! On this side, Mrs. Powell as Young Norval, in Hume's tragedy of *Douglas*, in a short jacket-coat and tightly-fitting pantaloons of an extravagant tartan pattern. Look here! on this wall we see Mr. King as Touchstone, in *As You Like It*, in a most approved “shape” of all sorts of colours, and a parti-coloured jester's cap of no period whatever. On this wall hangs Mr. Woodward as Petruchio. How this spurious

fashion of so-supposed Spanish costume assails us on every side ! In another room, Lewis as Mercutio, in similar attire, and puffings and slashings in sleeves and trunks of no date whatever.

To come to more modern times, who would not smile to look on Incledon as Captain Macheath in black cloth suit of the period, with high white cravat of the peculiar exuberance of the Regency age, with heavy fetters between exceptionally black-breeched legs, marring the symmetry of his bright pantaloons ? or at Sinclair as Apollo, in *Midas*, with a spangled white tunic, made in the short-waisted fashion of the time, and with trim, but prominent, side whiskers ?

These examples might be repeated *ad infinitum*, but it must be acknowledged that in those days there was a general tendency, although after a most erroneous fashion, towards an attempt at correct theatrical costume. In the Garrick Club, however, there are but few examples which bring us up to the perfection of art, and evidence of true research into periods of history in their exemplification. The two most prominently to be cited are the portraits of Mr. Charles Kean as Louis XI., and that of the late Mr. Phelps as Cardinal Wolsey by that talented young actor and artist, Mr. Forbes Robertson.

CORIOLANUS ON THE STAGE.

BY ARTHUR HALLAM.

THE rumour that Mr. Irving is about to revive *Coriolanus* will be heard with wide-spread satisfaction. Though comparatively unknown to the public through the medium of the stage, this play is one of a high order of merit. Based upon Plutarch, it covers the four years which elapsed between the secession to the Mons Sacer and the death of Coriolanus, and as we go through it a vivid picture of the public life of Rome during that period rises before the eye. The author, while meeting the requirements of the theatre, adheres scrupulously to history ; indeed, many of the speeches are little more than transcripts of passages in the ancient biography from which he derived his materials. *Coriolanus*, like most of Corneille's tragedies, is essentially of a political nature, but brightened by gleams of genuine poetry. In relieving the gravity of the chief incidents, however, Shakspere goes to a length which the French dramatist would have deemed inartistic. There is a good deal of comedy in the play, especially when Menenius is before us. In the foreground, well and clearly delineated is the striking figure of Coriolanus,—stern, courageous, haughty, unbending, magnanimous. The play is one of great interest and value, but has seldom been represented.

Even in Shakspere's time it did not enjoy much success, if we are to judge from the fact that it remained unprinted until 1623. Mr. Halliwell-Phillips thinks it was produced as late as 1612. In that year a fourth edition of North's Plutarch was brought out; an error which had occurred in the previous issues, the substitution of "unfortunately" for "unfortunate," is set right in it, and on turning to a corresponding sentence in *Coriolanus* we

find the proper word given. Moreover, there is reason to believe that a copy of the 1612 edition in the Greenock Library belonged to Shakspere. These facts, however, do not establish Mr. Halliwell-Phillips's point. The play is written in Shakspere's last period style, but I incline to the hypothesis that it saw the light as early as 1609 or 1610. The King and the Commons were then at daggers drawn, the former requesting the latter "not to meddle with matters above their reach and capacity." Is it not probable, as Mr. Whitelaw asks, that *Coriolanus* was intended as a warning to both the pride of James and the gathering resistance of the Commons? The lines :—

Now humble as the ripest mulberry
That will not hold the handling,

may have been due to the proclamation issued in 1609 as to the breeding of silkworms; and the numerous allusions in the play to famine and death were probably suggested by the visitation of that year.

It was to a chain of public events that the tragedy which may be regarded as a disguised political *brochure* of the days of James I. owed its first revival after the ascendancy of the Puritans. In 1682, an ardent student of Master Shakspere's writings, Nahum Tate, was so struck with the applicability of *Coriolanus* to the then prevailing bitterness of faction that he determined to restore it to the stage. He had already "wrought into shape the costly material" left by Shakspere in *Lear*, and now he proceeded to perform a similar service for the Roman piece. His "alteration" of the latter was produced under the title of the *Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or the Fall of Caius Marcius Coriolanus*. In reading the prologue we should guard ourselves against the impression that the character of an author is necessarily deducible from what he writes. Nahum, as we learn from Gildon, was a man of "modesty," and a contemporary speaks of him as one who had but little to say for himself. The prologue to the *Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*, to say nothing of his remarks as to *Lear* might lead us to a different conclusion. Mr. Tate, we are told,

—only ventures to make gold from ore,
And turn to money what lay dead before.

However, it is pleasant to see that at a time when Shakspere was all but forgotten Mr. Tate made no attempt to pose as the sole author of the piece. Playwrights "adapting" under similar conditions in these enlightened days might not be quite so scrupulous. *Mais revenons à nos moutons*. *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*, regarded as an improvement upon *Coriolanus*, is really a very dreadful piece of business; but it is due to Tate to say that, although not able to spell Corioli correctly, he had erudition enough to set Shakspere right upon one point—namely, by showing that Caius Marcius did not "flutter the Volscians in Corioli" single-handed.

Five years after Tate perished so miserably in the Mint, where he had taken refuge from a pack of furious creditors, another "improvement" upon the play was effected. The adapter this time was John Dennis, by choice a playwright, but better known as a critic and calumniator. It was once said of him that he was the best instructor for a dramatic poet; he taught by his precepts to distinguish a good play, and by his examples to

distinguish a bad one. Dennis has not been the only critic to whom that remark is applicable. In his case its justice was proved by the play in question, which he called *The Invader of his Country, or the Fatal Resentment*. I commend it with confidence to those who, if Shakspere's *Coriolanus* should be revived at the Lyceum, may think proper to bring out a burlesque thereof. Fortunately Dennis's piece was represented only three times, although Booth appeared as Coriolanus and Mrs. Porter as Volumnia. Dennis thereupon printed his play and laid it at the feet of the Duke of Newcastle. In the dedicatory epistle he lets in a ray of light upon the theatrical history of the piece. The managers, he said, owed more to him than to any other writer in England, but had not done him justice. The *Invader*, though got up "in the interest of his country and his sovereign," had been derided by "two or three insolent actors without education or patriotism," Mr. Colley Cibber being one of the number. "The piece," continues Dennis, "was to have come out on November 10, but the managers put it off until the 11th, so that," heartless men, "it might not interfere with the benefit of a young author at Lincoln's-Inn Fields." This threw Mr. Dennis's benefit on a Friday, "the worst day in the week for an audience." To make matters worse, "a hundred gentlemen who intended to visit the theatre" on the occasion of that benefit "were either gone to meet the King or preparing in town to do their duty to him on his arrival from abroad." Mr. Dennis, it should be said, prated and wrote a good deal about liberty, but he winds up by asking the Duke of Newcastle, as the "lawful monarch of the stage," to interfere with the management of the theatres as his predecessors had done. The Duke, it need hardly be said, did not comply with the request. Next, in a public advertisement, Dennis virulently attacked Cibber, who had written the epilogue, and said that no one could get a play acted at Drury Lane unless he went so far from the truth as to describe Mr. Wilks as an excellent tragedian. The actor did not take any public notice of these attacks; but it is a significant circumstance that the *Invader* was the last piece written by Dennis, although he lived in penury for twelve years afterwards.

The next time *Coriolanus* appeared on the scene Shakspere's play was discarded altogether. Early in 1749 a declamatory tragedy on the subject by the author of the *Seasons*, then just deceased, was brought out at Covent Garden for the benefit of his family. Thomson took Dionysius Halicarnassensis and Livy as his guides, but represents Caius Marcius as endowed with every civil virtue. The scene throughout is laid in the Volscian camp. The Volumnia on this occasion was Mrs. Woffington, who did not hesitate to paint her pretty face with wrinkles in order to "look the part" well. The best scenes of Shakspere's and Thomson's plays were rolled together five years afterwards by Sheridan (an excellent Coriolanus), and again in 1789 by John Kemble. The latter, unlike the former, consisted principally of the older play; yet, curiously enough, the fine lines beginning—

His nature is too noble for the world

were omitted. As Coriolanus, by almost common consent, Kemble achieved his greatest triumph. In figure and action he "approached the beauty and grandeur of the antique," and his performance, at least in his best days, was

distinguished by great and sustained force. It may be doubted, however, whether he realized the Coriolanus of Shakspere. There was too much of the polished patrician about him. He seemed to forget that the man he represented was a barbarian soldier of primitive Rome. "Coriolanus," wrote Leigh Hunt, "is not a Roman of the elegant fashion of after times. He is one of the rougher soldiers of the early republic, and Shakspere evidently intended him for such. An apology is made to the people by his friends on the very score of his rough reading and want of address. Mr. Kemble made a fine picturesque mistake of the part." The same mistake was not made by Edmund Kean, whose Coriolanus would have been perfect if he could have acquired the repose necessary to illustrate the haughty elevation of the character. The original text of the tragedy was restored by Kean to the stage, an in all respects desirable innovation.

THE AUDIENCES OF NEW YORK.

By BRONSON HOWARD.

THE picturesque variety of a theatrical audience in London is entirely lacking in New York. There are semi-legendary memories of other days, when the contrasts of pit and gallery with stalls and private boxes were as strongly marked there as here. But by the abolition of the pit, and the banishment of its former denizens to the upper gallery the entire lower part of the house has now sunk to a dead level of respectability. I am glad, for my part, that the effort to make the same change in London failed a few years ago ; and as a dramatic author I hope to welcome a day when the pit shall return to its primitive glory, or rather to some fair share in the honour of the lower floor, in every American theatre. So long as the drama represents all varieties of human beings, its audiences should do the same. If we are to have a warmly sympathetic audience, we must have these varieties in close proximity to each other, as they constantly are in real life. Unfortunately for the American theatre it is hardly correct for me to say that the members of the pit have been banished to the gallery. They have deserted the building. Many of their friends in the gallery have gone with them.

The division of classes according to social position, wealth, and intelligence is no longer a matter of entrances and partition railings ; there are separate theatres devoted to the respective classes. Except when there is some overwhelming popular attraction, an auditor of Wallack's, the Fifth Avenue, or the Union Square sees very few representations of humble life ; and even when there is a "good gallery," he can only see a row of heads to indicate that anything other than "the best society" is near him. In the Fifth Avenue and the Union Square even this front row of heads belongs to people who have secured their seats at three English shillings. The normal gallery element is thus either almost or quite concealed from the remainder

of the audience. And what little there is of it is a silent element; not the exuberant, restless, explosive, irrepressible mass of humanity that crowds the cheaper places of a West-end London theatre. It is subdued by its own insignificance in comparison with the rest of the house. Furthermore it is a trifle too respectable itself to do anything which calls for that complacent and amused toleration from the "swells," so noticeable a feature in a London theatre. Nothing, perhaps, would arouse the indignation of an American gallery more fully than this, if its existence were suspected. The traditional term, "the Gods," has almost lost its meaning in New York. When Charles Mathews, in the *Critic*, last exclaimed, "When you pray to the gods, look up" (pointing to the gallery), the audience of Wallack's laughed gently, as if its older members could barely recall the memory of the joke.

To describe the peculiarities of an American audience, therefore, is much like describing a level country: the latter rich, perhaps, in foliage; the former brilliant with bonnets and drapery, but both monotonous and without variety. The fashionable "first night" audience in New York has one interesting peculiarity worth noticing. It is good-natured and kindly to a degree, which utterly destroys its value as a jury for the trial of a new piece or a new actor. Those interested in the result must watch it very closely, and with the eye of experience, to judge whether the applause is merely conventional, given as a matter of etiquette, so to speak, or the true expression of aroused feeling. Everyone, excepting, of course, the critics, seems to go with a placid determination that he or she will do his or her duty in making the occasion successful, whether the author, actor, and managers have done theirs or not. The persistency with which this determination is sometimes doggedly adhered to, like the forced smile of the bored guests at a fashionable dinner-party, is amusing, and almost quaint in its peculiarity. A member of a New York first night audience makes the French expression literal—he assists, and it is not his fault if his assistance is in vain. This characteristic makes an absolute failure in that city the most ghastly and formidable thing of its kind known to the civilized world. An author or manager can brace his nerves against the noisy indignation of a disgusted and demonstrative audience. He can endure less easily, but still endure, the tender silence of a grieved and disappointed audience. But what amount of writhing and gnashing of the teeth can express his feelings when an audience (as I have seen in New York) calls up the curtain on the first, second, third, and fourth acts of a new play, and two-thirds of it quietly walk out of the house before the curtain rises on the fifth act? In such a case there is hardly an expression of disapproval heard throughout the evening in any part of the house, except in the subdued tones of private conversation between the acts. The gallery boy in the back row mentions his impressions to his neighbour, but joins the gentleman in the parquetto whenever there is a chance to applaud. As the curtain falls, the hands that have just been going through the form of respectful approval reach for hats and cloaks, and the last act is left to its fate with a remnant of the audience, more patient than the deserters, but not more calm, serene, and placid.

The most notable and hopelessly dismal failure of the past season in New York did not quite attain the honour of this form of condemnation. The

audience remained through the last act. Its imperturbable good nature was quite unimpaired, and an English visitor would have discovered nothing, except the utter badness of the new play, to indicate that it was not a success. All the resident New Yorkers in the house were perfectly cognizant of its fate before it was two-thirds finished, and the indefinable general impression found a silent language in quiet glances of the eye from one to another. What would have specially puzzled an Englishman on this occasion was, that the audience called for the author at the end of the piece, and so persistently, for some moments, that the manager was obliged to come before the curtain, explain that he was not present, and offer his "thanks" by proxy. The [case was made peculiarly amusing by the fact that the manager was himself a new-comer in the city and was completely deceived. He did not discover until the next day, from the press and his treasury receipts, that his own grateful words of acknowledgement formed the last bit of comedy his audience had enjoyed during the evening. His bewilderment, expressed in various forms of indignant protest, was a theme of amusing comment in club circles and elsewhere for two or three weeks afterwards. The author, in this instance, was not a popular favourite whom the audience wished to treat leniently. He was utterly unknown, and on his first trial. The most marked failure next to this, of the season, belonged to a very celebrated author. He knew the audience by experience, and retired from the theatre before there was an opportunity to call him before the curtain, knowing by instinct the fate of his play. In this case, also, the manager was obliged to appear in the author's absence; but there was no misunderstanding here; the situation was as clear on both sides of the foot-lights as if manager and spectators were winking at each other. Audiences are a curious study, and incomprehensible to the most experienced student, but it has been reserved, I think, for the New York audience to invent and execute this peculiar kind of practical joke on manager and author. Whether or not it is an offshoot of the humour which is supposed to underlie the serious, almost sad, American character, I cannot say. But if any English dramatist wishes to appreciate one of the blessings of his native land, if he wishes to know what a luxury it is to have his bad piece "guyed" unmercifully by pit and gallery, and frowned upon by the stalls, let him assist at the failure of his own play before a smiling good-natured, patient New York audience.

Portraits.

XXVI.—MR. NEVILLE.

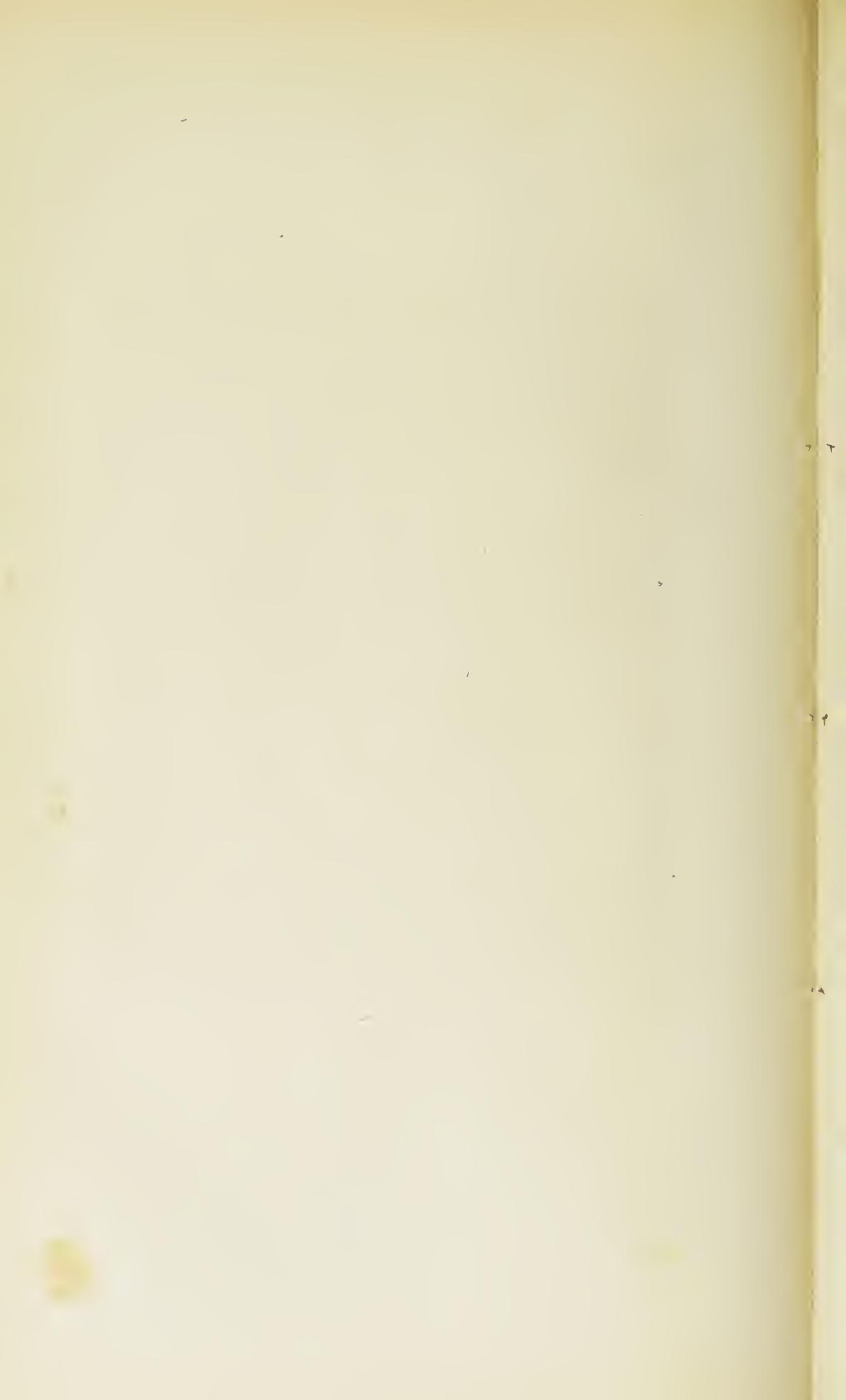
MANY years ago an amusing incident occurred at a provincial theatre. The play was *Pizarro*, and the scene in which Cora leaves her infant asleep on a mossy bank while she seeks better shelter had come on. No sooner had she disappeared than, with a roguish twinkle in his eye, the apparently helpless baby got up, and to the mingled astonishment and delight of the audience, but amidst execrations both loud and deep from the players behind the scenes, relieved the gravity of the performance by dancing a hornpipe in the most approved fashion. This precocious youth was Henry Neville, son of Mr. John Neville, the actor and theatrical manager. The little escapade we have noticed may be said to have sealed his fate. Everybody declared him to be a "born artist," and in course of time, although intended by his father for the army, he joined a theatrical company which visited the principal towns of Lancashire and Ireland. For some time he endured the hardships incident to the life of the strolling player, never refusing a part, however insignificant it might be, and generally acquiring experience at a rather high priece. The disappointments he met with were sufficient to induce him to leave the stage in disgust, but his industry and perseverance never gave way. Eventually he obtained his reward ; Mr. Copeland, the manager of the Liverpool amphitheatre, engaged him to play "walking gentleman;" and in the autumn of 1860 he appeared at the Lyceum, then in the hands of Madame Celeste, as Percy Ardent in the *Irish Heiress* and Victor Savignie in *Adrienne*. The freshness and buoyancy of his acting instantly attracted attention, the consequence being that in the following year he was engaged at the Olympie. The prosperity which that theatre had so long enjoyed was on the decline ; Robson's health had given way, and the company so long associated with him was breaking up. Mr. Neville, after appearing in Mr. Oxenford's *Jack of all Trades* and Mr. Watts Phillips's drama *Camilla's Husband* (in the latter, as in other pieces, he was supported by Robson), went far to restore the fortunes of the house by his impersonation of Bob Brierley in the *Ticket-of-leave Man*. The "good-natured Lancashire lad, unjustly convicted of crime, striving hard to get a living, persecuted by his former enemies, and finally proving by his death that there was 'some good in a ticket-of-leave man after all,'" was vividly realized throughout by the actor, whose knowledge of the Lancashire dialect, acquired in his early rambles, here proved of great service. Mr. Neville now held a prominent place in his profession, and by his subsequent essays at the Olympic,—as Ivan in the *Serf*, as Joseph Wilmot in *Henry Dunbar*, and as Valjean in a version of *Les Misérables*—he perceptibly confirmed the advantage he had gained. Migrating in 1867 to the Adelphi, he appeared as Job Armroyd in *Lost in*



THE THEATRE NO. 13, NEW SERIES

WOODBURYTYPE.

*George
Aug. S. Deville*



London, and Farmer Allan in Mr. Reade's version of Mr. Tennyson's *Dora*. The former character, that of an uncouth but fine-natured miner, was one which his hearty style and mastery of north-country dialect enabled him to sustain with the happiest results; in the latter, as Mr. Reade says, "he put off his youth, and was the lion-hearted old farmer, with a bosom that could suffer, but with a will that could not bend." In 1869, having fulfilled an engagement at the Globe, he returned to the Adelphi to play the Sheffield mechanic in Mr. Reade's *Put Yourself in His Place*. Then came an engagement at the Vaudeville, in the course of which he played Charles Courtley and Charles Surface with delightful briskness and point. Soon afterwards, in 1873, he became the manager of the theatre associated with his chief successes in London, the Olympic, and during his tenure of power there brought out some plays at once remarkable in themselves and calculated to employ his talent to good purpose. We refer more particularly to *Clancarty*, the *Two Orphans*, and *Buckingham*. His assumption of the proscribed Jacobite lord was picturesque and strong; the character of the lame and down-trodden knife-grinder enabled him to show that he could excel in great pathos as well as in vigorous action. In selecting his *pièces de resistance* he made more than one mistake, but it may fairly be said that when he did so his judgment rather than his taste was at fault, as he availed himself of the best dramatic writers of our time. He has now given up the theatre, and is playing at the Adelphi in *Amy Robsart*. Mr. Neville is one of the most distinguished actors we possess. He excels in "dramatic comedy," and is, perhaps, the best heroic stage lover in his profession. His strength lies in parts which require energy rather than polish, but all his creations are carefully individualised. Impulsive, hearty, and genuine, he gives what may be called a distinctively English character to his acting, and is never more at home than when he has to express an honest manliness. There are professions in which interest is of more importance than talent, but that can hardly be said of acting. No amount of interest can procure a lasting reputation for the actor if he is unworthy of it. Help avails little; he must depend upon himself alone. Degrees in his profession are attained by degrees, and in Mr. Neville we see an actor who, by dint of natural gifts and perseverance, has passed through the intermediate ranks and become a general of his class. His sympathies, it may be added, are not exclusively with the stage. He paints, he carves, he models. He has written a thoughtful book on the theatre. He is a crack shot, having won the Three Stars and the St. George's Challenge Vase. He has won fame in several ways, but wears it without arrogance or self-assertion.

Fenilleton.

AN EXCUSE FOR THE GLASS.

By GERALD DIXON.

AND so you, Rudolf, like the rest of the world are an admirer of the Montagu, eh?"

"Yes: I think her the greatest actress and the most beautiful woman I have ever seen."

"My dear boy, luckily for you your experience of actresses is small. When I was your age I daresay I thought as you do. I was soon disillusionized."

"How?"

"By meeting the adored object off the stage."

"But your adored object was not Miss Montagu!"

The other laughed. "No, indeed, Rudolf, and what was once medicine for me may now ease you of your malady. Come here to-morrow at 11. Miss Ida Montagu is going to sit to me for my Juliet."

"May I, *really*?" cried Rudolf.

"You may, really; and if you feel disposed you can also bring a canvass and limn her beloved features on your own account. I don't suppose she will object."

So the subject dropped. Lambert Gwyn never wasted words, rarely even indulged in them. Poet, painter, playwright, he had won for himself reputation after exhausting the temporary adulation offered by the world to a man of wealth and family. Ambitious in the highest sense he was not. Indeed, his favourite jests were always levelled against personal distinction; yet his pride of race and enjoyment for work led him into distinct rivalry with his most successful contemporaries. To be more definite, Lambert Gwyn's verscs were much quoted by certain amiable enthusiasts, his pictures were exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery, and his plays, which were, as a rule, original, generally paid the expense of production. In addition to his achievements, he was at least forty years of age, strikingly handsome, sufficiently wealthy to indulge in any amount of whims, and—a bachelor. So the world made much of Lambert Gwyn, and he was content with its admiration.

In the days of his more impetuous vanity he had loved and was about to be married to a girl who had absorbed all his ambition and regard. She died before their happiness was complete. No matter to us, how; though Lambert Gwyn reproached himself as the cause. Exposure to night air, in obedience to his caprice, resulted in a chill, and that chill in sudden death. Her only living relative was a younger brother, Rudolf Moore. The son of an English painter by a German mother of noble family, Rudolf, devoted to art, was younger than most Englishmen of his years. Healthy in mind

as well as in body, he accepted the beauties of life without venturing to mar their symmetry by a contemplation of its follies. Pure, courageous, and self-denying, enthusiastic and impressionable, Rudolf Moore was so unlike the youth with which Lambert Gwyn had moved, that the man of fashion had taken the student to his heart. His expressions were hardly as warm as his sentiments, but tepid as they were Rudolf prized them beyond rubies.

To the grand studio in Kensington Rudolf went at the appointed hour and was introduced to Miss Ida Montagu, the celebrated actress. "An excellent painter, and very good and dear friend!" Lambert Gwyn had said, after presenting him to the lady, who looked somewhat surprised and disappointed, and the boy had flushed with delight at the inspiring words.

She posed herself by kneeling on a *prie-Dieu* chair, her cheek resting on her right hand.

"Now," said Lambert Gwyn, "if you can fancy that Mr. Moore is your Romeo, I shall be able to catch the expression I want."

"Will you be kind enough to be Romeo, Mr. Moore?" she asked, in her thrilling voice; but she cast a reproachful look at Gwyn immediately the words had left her.

Rudolf blushed. "Of course, I shall be happy to be of use," he stammered.

"Sit down, Rudolf," said Lambert, "and work. Mr. Moore is your most enthusiastic admirer, Miss Montagu, and begs permission to make a sketch of you."

She smiled somewhat defiantly at the artist, and told Rudolf that she was highly flattered. Then she held her tongue, and the men worked, Lambert easily, Rudolf intensely.

It was a dangerously happy pastime for Rudolf, unused as he had been lately to the society of accomplished women. He could watch the varying expressions break from the corners of those full, red lips, and pour into the depths of her great, brown eyes. She was almost a typical Juliet, thought Rudolf, with her low, broad forehead, her olive complexion, and her thick, black hair. Her figure was generous without being expansive, and her hands, which she used with such telling effect upon the stage, were long and shapely. In silence the three sat, until the woman broke it.

"What an inspiriting pair you are, to be sure!" cried she. "Do you also find it impossible to talk and paint, Mr. Moore?"

Rudolf coloured, and Gwyn answered her.

"To paint and flirt is impossible. Mr. Moore no doubt hesitates in resolving his admiration into expression."

"Dear me, what long words! When will the new play be ready?"

"Two acts are finished, the third is half done."

And so the conversation dragged on. At noon Rudolf rose.

"You are not going?" asked Lambert.

"Yes. A dealer is coming to my studio in half-an-hour about a picture."

"Oh! very well; then good-bye; to-morrow at eleven."

"To-morrow at eleven," and, with a grave and low bow to Miss Montagu, Rudolf withdrew.

No sooner had he gone than Lambert threw down his brush. "I won't trouble you any further to day," he said carelessly.

She left her *prie-Dieu* chair and looked him full in the face. "Why are you afraid of me, Lambert? Am I so ferocious?" and her big eyes melted as she looked at him.

"Not exactly ferocious; but you are young and famous, and your actions are liable to public comment," he answered, yawning.

"And, pray, who has constituted *you* my director? I am answerable to no man. Oh, Lambert!"

"Yes?"

"Are you *quite* sure that my part is the *only* one in the new play?"

"No, I won't say that. But rest assured that it is the best; and now run away, child. Come to-morrow at the same time."

"Write and tell the boy *not* to come, and I will."

"The boy will be here at eleven, be sure," he answered, turning towards his writing-desk.

"I hate boys," said she, stamping her foot.

"Uhm! has it ever occurred to you to carry your hatred a little further on?"

"What do you mean?"

"As far as men of, say, forty or thereabouts," he answered, with ironical gravity.

"What a happy idea!" said she, "I daresay it will occur to me by to-morrow." And she sailed out of the studio in all her glory of despised beauty.

Lambert sighed as he lighted a cigarette. "Ah, me! Life would be almost enjoyable were it not for women."

On the following day it was evident that some change in her attitude towards the two men had occurred to her. Her manner as regarded Lambert Gwyn might be expressed as easy indifference; in Rudolf she entertained an intelligent interest, a well-bred curiosity, which succeeded in loosening his tongue not a little.

Lambert chafed somewhat; not that jealousy afflicted him, he was vexed that the boy should be wheedled and hoodwinked. After an hour's work he declared the sitting over and intimated to the actress that his picture, as far as she was concerned, was finished.

"You mean that I am not to come again, Mr. Gwyn?" she asked with polite indifference.

"I mean that I shall not trespass upon your valuable time to help me in my poor picture, Miss Montagu."

"O, yes, I understand," she returned with a stage bow; "may I look, please, Mr. Moore?"

Rudolf stepped away from his easel to allow her to see his work. She was delighted. "So *much* more refined than those photographs," she thought.

When she had gone Rudolf remained painting in silence for some time; Lambert Gwyn puffed at a cigarette cautiously.

"Not disillusionized yet, I suppose, Rudolf?" he asked tentatively.

"I do not understand the necessity, Mr. Gwyn."

"Uhm! She is pretty and cat-like and as greedy of admiration as her pet pug."

"She is a genius," Rudolf broke in.

"Yes: she can act: that is when she is fitted with a part. She needs a man who can gauge her capacities; vanity prevents *her*."

"I am not a great judge of acting," exclaimed Rudolf, rather more submissively, "but to me she always illustrates some fresh beauty either in elocution or ——"

"My dear Rudolf you mustn't fall in love with her."

"I suppose so. But I should be singular if I did not."

"She has a surfeit of admirers, has the Montagu, and, to do her justice, she treats them all with delightful impartiality."

"What?" cried Rudolf, flushing as only very fair men can, "you don't mean that ——"

"I mean simply what I say. I believe her to be a thoroughly good girl, and a match for any amount of adorers. Stick to your painting, my boy. I shall live to see you President of the Royal Academy yet."

During the next few days Rudolf laboured at his picture intended for Burlington House, and offered it on the appointed day to the consideration of the distinguished gentlemen on whose fickle judgment the fate of the painting rested. Strolling in the park afterwards he met Miss Ida Montagu.

She was in a Victoria, but, after bowing to him, ordered her coachman to pull up alongside the railings.

"Well, Mr. Moore," said she, with her entrancing smile, "and how is the portrait?"

"Just as you last saw it," said he, with a glow of pleasure.

"How lazy of you!"

"I was afraid to touch it in your absence, Miss Montagu."

"Don't you want to finish it?" she asked.

"Of course I do."

"Then I suppose I must give you a sitting or two?"

"Come to-morrow," said Rudolf eagerly, and he gave her his card.

"At the usual time, I suppose," she said composedly, and presently she drove away.

She went to his studio the next and the three following days, attended by a demure female, who knitted. The fifth day she came alone, but long before then Rudolf was satisfied that he could not live without her. He was of a sanguine temperament, and young enough to despise obstacles. Of such trivialities as social difficulties he never thought at all.

This, the fifth, was to be the last sitting. Half-an-hour of work, and Ida turned pale, a sudden faintness evidently possessed her. Rudolf offered her wine. She sipped, and recovered.

"Now, Mr. Moore, a toast," she cried.

"Thanks. I very rarely drink anything but water," said Rudolf.

"Come, you must drink, 'To the picture!'" and then she sang, with quaint expression,

Let the toast pass, drink to the lass,
I warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

"What? You hesitate still? You *want* an excuse?" she asked with intoxicating gaiety. "You want an excuse? Very well; here I am."

"Stay here," he cried, as he clasped her to his breast. "Oh, Ida, I love you more than life!" His silence once broken, his secret out, he poured forth a torrent of love, such as Ida certainly had never listened to even on the stage. She actually trembled at the vehement utterance of his emotion. It was so strange, because so true. He kissed her again and again; she suffered him, for she was dazed at the suddenness and the reality of the thing. Coquette though as she was she could not sham to so honest a heart. She released herself, and left him rejoicing, though sad herself. Rudolf went to his dearest friend, and told him that he had won her.

Lambert Gwyn received the intelligence in silence. He had not expected it. He knew that she was shallow, and believed that Rudolf would easily fathom her fickleness.

Miseri quibus intentata nites!

"Curse her!" he cried to himself, "She in her vanity has crushed this noble boy, and for what?"

What was to be done? Let her fool him to the top of her bent, or show Rudolf her true game? Better the latter, even if it cost Lambert the boy's love. Rudolf would live and learn to thank him. Yes, thought Lambert Gwyn, his eyes shall be opened.

She never went to Rudolf's studio again. He sought her at her own house, but never found her. There was evidently a plot against him; she loved him he was sure. Some one was keeping her from him. He wrote her letters full of passion and despair, but she answered never a word; he waited for her at the theatre; she avoided him. One day he saw her enter her house with a man. He rang the bell furiously a minute later. She was denied him as usual. He slunk away with an oath upon his lips; then madness seized him. He rushed to the back of the suburban villa, scaled the garden wall, and leapt upon the grass-plot. She was there, and as Rudolf rushed towards her, the man gathered her to his breast and kissed her lips. The man was Lambert Gwyn.

Rudolf was borne away senseless, and the other, his end accomplished, left her for ever.

As years rolled on, Rudolf probably painted none the worse for his first experience of passion. Neither was she the less famous because of her levity. Of the three, perhaps Lambert remembered the most acutely:—

One likes to show the truth for the truth;
That the woman was light is very true:
But suppose she says, Never mind that youth,
What wrong have I done to you?

En Passant.

A N account given by a Frenchman named Balthazar de Moneours of a visit he paid to London in 1663 has just been disinterred. He was governor to the young Duc de Chevreuse, and accordingly "moved in good society." One evening he was at Drury-lane Theatre :—"L'apresdinée nous fusmes chez le Milord de S. Alban et de là à la Comedie dans la loge du Roy. Le Theatre est le plus propre et le plus beau que j'aye jamais veu, tout tapissé par le bas de bayette verte ; aussi bien que toutes les loges qui en sont tapissées avec des bandes de cuit doré. Tous les bancs du parterre où toutes les personnes de condition se mettent aussi, sont rangez in amphiteatre, les uns plus hauts que les autres. Les changemens de Theatre et les machines sont fort ingenieusement inventées et executées. Madame de Castlemene y vint trouver le Roy lequel en sortant menu M. le Duc avec luy dans son carosse se promener au Cours, et de là chez la Reyne Mere." He next visited the Duke's Theatre :—"L'apresdiné je fus à la Comedie du Duc d'York où les changemens de scene me plurent beaucoup, mais non pas la froideur des actions et du parler tant des hommes que des femmes, dans les pressans mouvements de colere et de crainte." M. de Moncours, it should be added, met here with one "De la Molière :" was this the author of *Tartuffe* on a flying visit to London ?

At a farewell dinner given to Madame Christine Nilsson, on the eve of her departure from England, the Swedish *diva* complained that the rain had never ceased all the day ; whereupon the following impromptu was written at the dinner-table by Mr. Henry Hersee :—

IMPROPTU.

"Encore une étoile
Qui file, file, et disparait."—(B'ranger.)

THE fair Christine just now complained
That ceaselessly to-day it rained :
—From us, at morn, she hastes away.
The ingrate ! can she not perceive
Our weeping skies perforce must grieve,
Quand elle "file, et disparait"?

ANOTHER French view of Mr. Irving. "He is a master," writes M. Sarcey, "of the art of dressing and making up for a character. His Louis XI. seems like a portrait of the time detached from its frame. The whole of the first part of Louis XI. is played in a sober and very animated style. In the second I thought he went too far in seeking for realistic effects. Thus, when Nemours leaves him with his life, he remains for some time with his face on the ground, uttering inarticulate cries. At times, with his bursts of true passion, and his bizarre eccentricities, he reminds us of Rouvière, over whom he has the advantage of being elegant and proud of aspect. His face is mobile and animated ; his smile is very pleasing. His hands are graceful and speaking, and are used on the stage with great skill. In the last act, when he appears in all the paraphernalia of royalty, and, awaking from a sort of trance, rises up and stretches out his trembling fingers to pluck the crown from the Dauphin,—the attitude is superb, and a painter who was with me at the time gave vent to a cry of admiration."

M. SARCEY also saw *Drink*. "The actor who represents Coupeau," he writes, "struck me as having a great command of natural expression in the scenes of domestic life. His performance is in my opinion superior, indeed altogether superior, to that of our Gil-Naza, the original representative of this character on our stage."

M. SARCEY has finished his series of biographies of members of the Comédie Française. His last volume is devoted to M. Barré and M. Coquelin cadet. Of the former a curious anecdote is related. Many years ago he was playing Pierrot, in Molière's *Don Juan*, at the Odéon, when Provost happened to drop in with Mdlle. Mars. The old comedian was so charmed by the performance that he spoke of the young fellow as one who ought to be brought to the Comédie Française. Not long afterwards, another Odéon actor, Rousset, went there and applied for an audition. "Is it you who plays the comiques at the Odéon?" "Yes." "And of whom M. Provost speaks so highly?" "M. Provost is very kind." "Good; you are engaged." The papers signed, Rousset was brought into the foyer. "Sapristi!" cried Provost, "this is not Barré?" It was, however, too late, and ten years elapsed before Barré reached the Comédie Française.

M. FAURE has sustained a heavy loss. His valet-de-chambre, Raffaele Raffi, known at the theatres as Raff, is dead. This eccentric man used to declare with pride that since his early life he had been in the service of artists only. He was valet to Rossini, whose perruque he arranged in a manner peculiar to himself, and on the death of the composer was engaged by M. Faure. He died surrounded with portraits of his two masters, and has been buried in M. Faure's family vault.

DRAMATIC critics continue to be criticized. The Manchester papers having fallen foul of *Truth*, the acting-manager of the company travelling with that play flew to arms, or rather to his pen. The "gentlemen who pose as dramatic critics in Manchester," he stated in a handbill, "differ from the critics of all other cities in Christendom. Their affectation of super-fastidiousness is amusingly transparent and curiously provincial. Their assumption of elevation in art reminds one of what Walpole called *bon ton*, which he defined generally as 'the *ton* of people who are not really acquainted with the manners of good company, because an affected one is never used by really good company.' There is a good deal of this bogus *bon ton* in Manchester criticism."

IN a recent interview, Mr. Lester Wallack stated in regard to dramatic taste that there has been a great revulsion in latter years, and he remarked:—"The truth is that burlesque has almost driven intellectual acting off the stage, for you can nowadays represent no thought, no passion, no feeling, that may not be turned into ridicule by the utterance of some of the current catch-words. If I say 'Never,' you will hear a rippling through the audience,—'Well, hardly ever;' and if the lines compel a reference to somebody's relations, you will be sure of some side remark about the inevitable 'Sisters and the cousins and the aunts.' I tell you it's all wrong and it's demoralizing. I believe that Shakspere himself would not be exempt from just such infamous interpolations if they were not sacrilegious."

TOWARDS the end of June a portrait of Mr. E. L. Blanchard was placed by the side of that of Mr. Oxenford in the Junior Garrick Club. The banquet which accompanied the ceremony was presided over by Mr. Swinburne, and was largely attended. Half a century ago, it was said, Mr. Blanchard was at a school in Staffordshire, and the gentleman who procured for him his first half-holiday witnessed the presentation of the portrait.

ST. ETHELDREDA'S CHAPEL, Ely-place, has been restored. This building is the last remaining portion of old Ely House, where the plot which led to the execution of Somerset was hatched, and where, according to Prynne, the last of the English Mysteries, *Christ's Passion*, was represented on a Good Friday in the

time of James I. before "thousands" of spectators. Shakspere's allusions to the place are well-known.

MR. HENRY SMART, whose death has just been announced, was a remarkably clever composer and organist. His tastes lay in the direction of sacred music, but many years ago he composed the opera the *Gnome of Hartzburg*, which was well received.

It is related that while Mr. Charles Pope was recently rending the Shaksperean heart of Grass Valley, California, with tragedy, an antique beet of pre-historic dimensions flew from the gallery and rested for an instant on the tragedian's elastic nose. "If," he said, advancing to the footlights, "the beat who threw that vegetable will be at the stage-door when the play is over I will be happy to punch his head." When the play was over Mr. Pope was surprised to discover a ring created in the alley at the back of the theatre. It was surrounded by a strong delegation of gallery gods, and in the midst sat a shock-headed hoodlum upon his second's knee, stripped to the waist, and blandly awaiting his antagonist. The latter jumped into his carriage. "Why, don't yer mean to spar?" somebody inquired with much astonishment. "Go to, sirrah!" growled the tragedian, as he drove off; "a murrain on these ape-faced villagers."

M. HERVÉ is in great request among French librettists, and is at the present moment engaged on the following works:—*Panurge*, opera in three acts, libretto by Clairville, for the re-opening of the Bouffes Parisiens Theatre, September 1st; *La Femme à Papa*, opera in three acts, libretto by MM. Hennequin and Millaud, to be produced at the Variétés, Paris, October 1st, with Mdlle. Judic in the leading rôle; *Cardenio*, opera in three acts, libretto by Dubreuil, to be produced at Les Noveautés, Paris, in December next; and an opera in three acts (title not yet fixed), libretto by MM. Burain and Marot, to be produced at the Fantaisies Parisiennes in January next. Even the fertile inspiration of M. Hervé must be heavily taxed in the production of four three-act operas within the space of six months!

MR. CARL ROSA'S provincial operatic tour will commence at Dublin, August 10th. His next London season will commence at Her Majesty's Theatre, January 10th, when *Rienzi* will be reproduced. Among the contemplated additions to the repertory of the Carl Rosa Company will be English adaptations of Verdi's *Aïda*, Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and Ambroisi Thomas's *Mignon*.

GREATNESS has its drawbacks. Early in the present year, when several adaptations of novels were produced or revived in Paris, M. Dumas—so the story goes—was worried nearly out of his life by applications from romanciers to make plays out of their works. It was to no purpose that he sought to escape his tormentors by denying himself to them. One day a man called with a "rare work of art," and was instantly shown in. "Monsieur," he said, when M. Dumas entered, "I am the romancier Paul Saunière, and I come to ask you to convert my last story into an eight act drama for the Porte Saint Martin." On another occasion just as the dramatist had entered a voiture near his house, a man dressed as a cocher popped his head through the window, saying "Morbleu! I am Emile Richebourg. Have you read my *Enfant du Faubourg*? it would make a superb piece for the Ambigu."

A PERFORMANCE analogous to the Passion Play that has aroused such opposition in San Francisco has been given many times in New York and vicinity since last Christmas, at which time it was first produced by the Religious Plastic Art Company. It was witnessed by many of the Catholic clergy and repeated in several parochial halls. The first representation was given on Christmas night at Steinway Hall, and consisted of a series of tableaux vivants illustrating the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ. The representation was not a pecuniary success;

and but recently it was stated that the two young women who represented the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene were compelled to employ a lawyer to collect a portion of their salaries. The proprietors, however, finally settled with all their performers, and have since given a number of additional exhibitions.

MISS ANDERSON was recently interviewed by a New York critic :—“Why does the Nurse, in speaking of your Juliet, say ‘not eighteen,’ instead of ‘not fourteen?’” “Because I think I am young enough to be known as eighteen. Very likely when I get older I shall have it fourteen. Do you know that Mr. Longfellow took a great fancy to me? By the way, he is the only gentleman I ever called on. He sent word that he wished to see me and couldn’t very well come to me, and would I be good enough to go to him. Of course I went. But he did come to see me very often after that, and we all went to the opera together. He caught cold in my service finally, and fell quite ill. He is the kindest and most charming of old gentlemen, and I shall never forget how he encouraged me and made me enthusiastic.” “But surely he is not the only one.” “Well, no.” There was Dom Pedro—I am a favourite with old gentlemen, I believe—and General Sherman. The latter is an old friend. You think, perhaps, he is a very stern, cold man, but he is no such thing. He writes the most charming letters you ever saw, and he talks just as he writes. And, dear me! how many questions he asks. Whenever he comes to see us he wants to know how many rooms we have, and how much we pay for them, and where we came from last and where we are going next—all of which is good to hear, though I do laugh. Yes, I can fence. I have a roomful of swords and dumb-bells and clubs, and I practise with them every day. Unwomanly you think, perhaps? Well, I was not strong at all when I began, and now I am full of health. My father taught me fencing. I remember how pleased he was, and I too, the first time I disarmed him.” Miss Anderson added that she was sensitive to criticism, and she thought everybody was. Mr. Edwin Booth told her to pooh-pooh it and brush it off as she would a flea, but she could not do it, she said; and his wife had told her that he himself could not.

THE *Quatre Sergents de la Rochelle*, lately revived in Paris, has a curious history. Its production was interdicted from the first, and this interdiction has been handed down from Government to Government without any explanation of such rigour. Louis Philippe, it is alleged, said on his death-bed to his son, “Moreover, if you come to reign, do not let the *Quatre Sergents* be playcd.” Napoleon III., M. Thiers, and Marshal MacMahon successively refused to set aside the veto, and it was not until M. Tunquet had read the piece half-a-dozen times that he ventured to break the tradition.

IT is told of Mr. McKean Buchanan, the actor, that at one time his valet came to him while at breakfast in an hotel, and after reminding him of engagements that would keep him occupied all the morning, suggested that in order to save time he should order dinner at once. “What will you have, sir?” inquired the valet. “What do I play to-night?” asked Buchanan. “Richard, sir,” was the response. “Then order roast beef, very rare.” A wonder-stricken youth, sitting near the tragedian, and who was profoundly impressed by the near presence of the actor, timidly remarked, “Excuse me, Mr. Buchanan, but what do you eat before playing Claude Melnotte?” “Waffles, sir, waffles,” responded Buchanan in his most pompous tone.

FROM certain statistics published in the Madrid papers, it appears that during the year 1878 no fewer than 310 new dramatic works were produced in the Spanish theatres, of which 192 were one-act pieces, 39 were in two acts, 73 in three acts, and 6 in more than three acts. Most of these works were of ephemeral interest, and it is certain that a very scanty proportion of them will hold the stage.

At the Play.

—♦—
IN LONDON.

THE later portion of the season of French plays at the Gaiety, though it attracted at least as much attention as did the performances of the preceding three weeks, can scarcely be said to have possessed as much intrinsic interest. The impression made by Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas*, as interpreted by Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt and M. Mounet-Sully, was by no means so favourable as that produced by the same artists' rendering of *Hernani*. The interpretation of *Andromaque*, with Mdlle. Dudlay for Hermione, did not rise so high as that of *Phèdre*; nor was the Mercadet of M. Got considered so perfect as his M. Poirier. As Camille, however, in *On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour*, Mdlle. Croizette distinctly improved upon her previous performances, although it must be noted candidly, if somewhat ungraciously, that her presence is now rather heavy in its magnificence for a place in Alfred de Musset's most tragic of *proverbes*. There is one characteristic peculiar to the art of the poet displayed both here and in *Les Caprices de Marianne*, by a series of delicate changes tragedy is developed out of what seems mere airy badinage. Before we are conscious of what has taken place, the sheet lightning of the summer evening, fitful, playful, and devoid of serious purpose, has merged into the dark, rolling storm, which ends in disaster and death. Extreme delicacy of touch and the perfection of taste are needed in the transfer of a poem like this from study to stage. The representation at the Gaiety was fortunate in having for its Perdican the one stage-lover who can plead naturally, and yet with musical eloquence, and M. Delaunay's delivery of the exquisite passage in which Perdican describes to Camille the love that she cannot conceive, lingers in the memory like a strain of melody which we would not willingly let die. Another play in which a poetical conception is admirably embodied is the *Gringoire* of M. de Banville; a little play, not, it must be confessed, very strong in dramatic quality, but yet capable of affording M. Coquelin an opportunity for the display of pathos very genuine and very touching. Before passing to performances more typical of this French company, reference must be made to *L'Etincelle*, a pretty little comedietta, which disappointed only on account of the extravagant praise it evoked on its production. Somewhat similar in idea to Mr. Val Prinsep's Court comedietta *Cousin Dick*, it is so essentially French in the relationship of its *dramatis personæ* that it can hardly bear the process of transplanting shortly, we believe, to be bestowed upon it. The acting in it of M. Delaunay and Mdlle. Croizette was just what had been anticipated, but that of Mdlle. Samary, albeit bright and sunny, was rather exaggerated and obtrusive.

Classical comedy was seen at its best, according to the traditions of the Théâtre Français, in *Les Femmes Savantes* of Molière. Nothing could well be suggested as an improvement of the cast in which MM. Got and Coquelin were the pedants Trissotin and Vadius ; M. Delaunay, the lover Clitandre ; Madames Madelline Brohan, Favart, and Jouassain, the three learned ladies Philaminte, Armande, and Belise ; Mdlle. Baretta, the heroine Henrietta ; and Mdlle. Samary the Martine. The way in which the sense and spirit of the famous comedy as a whole were caught by one and all of these players could not well be over-praised, and the rich variety of the comedy-power at the command of the company was perhaps seen better here than in any other of its productions. *Les Plaideurs* of Racine, familiar to most of us if only by our recollection of “apposition” and speech-day at school, was distinguished chiefly by the admirable L’Intimé of M. Got ; and similarly, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, that delightful piece of fascinating roguery, gave M. Coquelin the opportunity of exercising some of his richest humour. In *L’Etourdi* M. Coquelin as Mascarille came similarly to the fore, and contrasted most effectively with the Lélic of M. Delaunay. In De Balzac’s comedy the Mercadet of M. Got compares not, upon the whole, favourably in English estimation with the Affable Hawk of Charles Mathews in the late G. H. Lewes’s *Game of Speculation*. The Mercadet of the French comedian is doubtless an excellent presentment of the business-like small financier of the Bourse, and as such may fairly deserve the success which his deceptions meet with his compatriots. But his brusque manner does not, to our way of thinking, suggest half the persuasive power needed for the triumphant executions of schemes like his. In *Ruy Blas*, given more than once, though it had not been promised during the six-weeks’ season, general disappointment was felt. M. Mounet-Sully managed to expend a great deal of energy over his presentment of the lackey’s love, ambition, and cruel degradation, but he did so without impressing his hearers. He shouted the address to the false councillors at the stalls instead of addressing it to the characters on the stage ; he declined to respond to the love which Ruy Blas awakens in the breast of his queen ; and he gratuitously increased the obvious improbabilities of the plot by needlessly injuring its motive in making Ruy Blas alternately abject and repulsive. As the Queen, Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt was not at her best, for in some of the most thrilling situations of the play she appeared unable to get up much interest, though she should have been a spectator with much at stake. There was, however, much charm in her suggestion of the young Queen’s weary hatred of her dull regal splendour, and it is needless to add that there were flashes of living fire in her treatment of the last terrible episode. On the whole, by far the best and most finished performances were those of M. Febvre as the sinister Don Salluste, and M. Coquelin as Don Cesar in the often-excised and wholly superfluous fourth act, which the comedian has almost entirely to himself.

The less familiar plays given in the period under notice are represented by *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*, by Jules Sandeau, and *Le Mariage de Victorine*, both of them pure and thoroughly pleasant comedies. In the former, Mdlle. Broisart played with charming sincerity, and M. Thiron,

though rather overweighted as the self-satisfied Marquis de la Seiglière, nevertheless gave much interest to this able study of typical character. *Le Mariage de Victorine* was noteworthy chiefly for Mdlle. Barretta's unexpected tenderness as the heroine. M. Aicard's *Davenant*, with which our visitors' series of performances closed, proved to have but little intrinsic value except as an ingenious vehicle for the introduction of recitations from Shakspere's dramas, admirably translated. The story is founded upon the tradition that Davenant was an illegitimate son of the author of *Hamlet*. The substitution of Mdlle. Dudlay, an actress of comparatively little experience, and of no special ability, for Mdlle. Bernhardt, as the Shakspere-loving hero, was necessarily disadvantageous to the representation, which found its best feature in M. Got's sketch of the old innkeeper, Davenant *père*.

DURING the visit of the Comédie Française the English stage may be said to have been on its trial. The relative merits and shortcomings of the two schools of acting were warmly and sometimes acrimoniously discussed and a good deal of misapprehension as to the quality and character of our acting had until then existed in literary and artistic Paris. M. Got and one or two of his comrades excepted, the *sociétaires* had never previously been in London, and the journalists who came over with them had the air of men exploring a comparatively strange land. Before long our visitors saw that they had been curiously deceived about us. Not to speak of other signs of civilisation, we had reached a high standard of histrionic excellence. They were all greatly astonished, and no one has expressed that astonishment with more amusing naïveté than the redoubtable critic of the *Temps*. The performances given at the Lyceum went far to dispel the erroneous notion we have alluded to. Mr. Irving has lately appeared in most of the plays associated with his name, now rather a long list. His acting in each was worthy of his reputation, and the frequent change of the programme has enabled him to prove to a greater extent than has hitherto been possible his power of individualising a character. His Hamlet and Melnotte have so recently been described in these pages that we need not dilate upon the impersonations anew, but a few words must be said of his share in the revivals he has lately undertaken. His Mathias, as before, forms a vivid picture of mental torture, relieved by gleams of an originally sunny nature. In Charles I. he felicitously unites the dignity of the king to the tenderness of the parent, and the historical tinge of melancholy in his look may be perceived in almost every scene. Not the least interesting of the revivals is that of *Eugene Aram*, inasmuch as, notwithstanding its idyllic beauty, the play has scarcely been seen on the stage since the year in which it was first produced. Happiness clouded by dark memories, anguish at the discovery of his crime, remorse and death,—these are the phases of the character of the schoolmaster, and the actor works them out with exquisite skill and pathos. In Richelieu the indications he gives us of an iron will and immense strength of character are tempered now and then by delightful strokes of humour, and the eyes flash lightning under the cavernous eyebrows and the silken tresses of old age. His Louis XI. is equally effective, not only in the strong element of comedy which runs through the part up to the last meeting with Nemours, but also in the

delirium which heralds the approach of death. This weak old man, with his rusty dress, the images stuck in his hat, his sunken eyes glistening and his thin hands quivering with passion, seems the "living embodiment of some power of evil." Individually complete and perfect in the way of contrast are Mr. Irving's Lesurques and Dubosc, the one a well-disposed and polished gentleman, the other a ruffian of the coarsest type. In *Charles I.* and *Eugene Aram*, as in *Hamlet* and the *Lady of Lyons*, Mr. Irving has been supported by Miss Ellen Terry, the charm of whose acting seems to increase with lapse of time. It is said that M. Coquelin declared her to be "Angélique, très-sympathétique, très tendre ;" adding, after a glanee at her through an opera-glass, "mais c'est éharmant ; elle a des vraies larmes dans ses yeux." Another performance which excited the French comedian's admiration was Mr. Warner's Coupeau. He sent his English confrère a very complimentary letter, saluting him as a "great artist." Mr. Vezin appeared on two or three occasions at the Adelphi as Richelieu, playing the character with a clearness and force which can hardly be too highly praised. The audience at the first performance, though small, applauded him with great heartiness—an incident which realled to mind the words of Oxberry in reference to Edmund Kean's début, "How the deuce so few of them kicked up such a row I have never been able to understand." Finally, comedy was well represented at the Court, the Prince of Wales's, and the Vaudeville. Elsewhere we have spoken of French and English histrionie art; in this place it need only be remarked that from this time we may expect the existenee of capable English actors and actresses to be more widely allowed in Paris.

THE ITALIAN OPERA season came to a close on Saturday last, both at Covent Garden and Her Majesty's Theatre. The history of the past season has not been entirely uneventful, but has not been fruitful in sourees of congratulation. A brief retrospect may prove interesting, and may suggest some points worthy of consideration by those who wish well to the art of musie. The Royal Italian Opera season commenced with a performance of Meyerbeer's grand Opera, *Le Prophète*, and concluded July 26th with *L'Etoile du Nord*, by the same composer. During the season a number of standard works were presented, but there were some which became "conspicuous by their absence." Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* and his *Don Giovanni* were represented. Beethoven's *Fidelio* was withheld. Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia* and his *Semiramide* were performed, but not his *Gillaume Tell*. Five of Meyerbeer's greatest works were presented, also three by Donizetti, and five by Verdi. *Rigoletto*, Verdi's masterpieee, was withheld, probably because a capable successor to Madame Albani, in the rôle of Gilda, was not available. Twenty-eight operas were produced during the season of sixteen weeks; a fact which exemplifies the wonderful resourees of the Royal Italian Opera and the untiring zeal of the conductors, Signor Vianesi and Signor Bevignani. Two works, entirely new to this country, were amongst the attractions of the season, *Les Amants de Vérone* (noticed in a July number), and *Le Roi de Lahore*, produced June 28th. The last-named opera, written by M. Louis Gallet, and composed by M. Jules Massenet, has been successful not only in Paris, where it was first produced in 1877, but also in Italy and Germany, and was favourably received in

London. The plot, founded on an Oriental legend, is not remarkable for romantic interest, and the music, though undeniably the work of a master-hand, is deficient in freshness of power. The most effective portions of it are melodies to which the *corps de ballet* execute evolutions supposed to represent the occupations of the "spirits of the blest" in Paradise. The vocal music is ambitious and fatiguing, but is deficient in melodic charm, and the opera is chiefly attractive as a grand *spectacle*. The *mise-en-scène* at Covent Garden was superb, and the leading characters were well-sustained. In his prospectus, Mr. Gye promised that "two at least" of four operas therein named should be produced during the season, and he has kept his word. Madame Adelina Patti, Mdlle. Zaré Thalberg, Madame Cepeda, Madame Scalchi, Signori Gayarré, Graziani, Cotogni and Ciampi, and M. Maurel have sustained their high reputations; and successful *débuts* have been made by Mdlles. Tuolla, Pasqua, Schou, Pyk, and Rosine Bloch, MM. Gailhard and Lassalle. Mdlles. Heilbron, Valleria and Belocca have also been favourably received; and the Royal Italian Opera has seldom had a stronger list of artists, except in the tenor department.

HER MAJESTY'S OPERA opened April 26th with Bizet's ever-welcome *Carmen*, and closed July 26th. During the season of twelve weeks eighteen operas were produced, including a number of admitted masterpieces by Mozart, Beethoven, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Verdi, Gounod, &c. The promise made in the prospectus of eight operatic revivals and new works was not fulfilled,—probably owing to the disarrangement of the managerial plans by the protracted indisposition of Mmes. Nilsson and Gerster at the earlier part of the season,—and the only absolutely new addition to the repertory was Verdi's *Aïda*, produced June 19th, with a superb *mise-en-scène*, and a tolerably satisfactory cast. The revival of Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* was deferred until the last week of the season. The production of the Italian version of Wagner's *Rienzi*, and the promised revivals of Rossini's *Semiramide* and his *Gazza Ladra*, had not been awaited with lively interest, but great disappointment was felt at the non-production of Glück's *Armida* and Boïto's *Mefistofele*. Excuses may be found for Mr. Mapleson, who had to contend with serious difficulties, but it cannot be denied that the public faith in managerial promises is severely tried when three-fourths of those promises go unfulfilled. Of the artists promised in the prospectus many were not forthcoming,—amongst whom may be mentioned Mdlle. Salla, Signori Masini, Rota and Medini, and M. Thierry; all of them artists of the highest rank, who could ill be spared. Mmes. Christine Nilsson, Gerster, Pappenheim, Hauk, Marie Roze, Tremelli, and Trebelli, MM. Fancelli, Candidus, Del Puente, Roudil and Galassi, and a *débutante*, Mdlle. Marie Van Zandt, worthily maintained the reputation of Her Majesty's Opera. The choristers were not up to the mark, especially the tenors. The band was excellent, and was ably conducted by Sir Michael Costa, aided at the extra morning performances by Signor Arditi, and occasionally by M. Sainton. During the last fortnight of the season "farewell performances" were given at cheap prices, and without the usual absurd restrictions as to evening dress. The popularity of these representations

and of the extra morning performances should lead our operatic managers to recognise the fact that music is no longer the luxury of a privileged few, but the chief delight of the many.

THE temptation to follow up *Drink* with *Another Drink* is one which we could scarcely expect to see resisted in these days, when parody is considered by so many managers to be the sincerest form of admiration for the productions of their rivals. It is, of course, useless to urge that the repulsive sufferings of a poor wretch dying from a hideous disease are not well suited to form the subject of the chief scene of a burlesque. This is possibly mere squeamishness of taste, and those who take a "robust" view of stage fun should perhaps be able to laugh away such scruples, while Mr. Anson gives a clever imitation of Mr. Warner's powerful acting in that episode of delirium tremens which makes the success of Mr. Reade's play at the Princess's. For ourselves, we must admit that while *Another Drink* contains much which is thoroughly amusing, it is upon the whole an unpleasant piece, and is the more unpleasant because it is so cleverly interpreted by the two principal artists engaged. The smart lines of Messrs. Savile Clarke and Lewis Clifton are telling enough, and there are plenty of touches in the comic Coupean and the grotesque Gervaise which compel laughter. Best and most inoffensive of all is the skit upon the frantic love-making of M. Mounet-Sully and Mdlle. Sarah-Bernhardt, which is introduced by Mr. Anson and Mme. Dolaro with well-founded confidence in their command of the language which has to be spoken in this piece of genuine burlesque. But when it comes to the drunkard's horror at his introduction to a huge property-spider and the monstrous card-board beetles, and when his insane ravings break into comic song, and into allusions to "Charley Warner" and his engagement by Mr. Walter Gooch upon a ninety-nine years' lease, while all the time much of the realistic repelleness of the scene is preserved, it seems proper to protest that the limits of legitimate laughter have been passed, and that effect is secured at the expense of good feeling and good taste.

BUT whatever may be the sins of *Another Drink*, or rather we should, perhaps, say its indiscretions, the work of Messrs. Savile Clarke and Lewis Clifton cannot, at all events, be accused of pointlessness and imbecility, the characteristics which caused *Lord Mayor's Day*, another production of the erratic Folly management, to be a decided failure. This adaptation of MM. Labiche and Delacour's amusing absurdity, *La Cagnotte*, proved dull and insipid, and its general feebleness in representation amply justified Mr. W. S. Gilbert's eagerness to disavow all association with its authorship. In justice to the Folly Theatre it should, however, be noted, that the performance there of *The First Night*, by Mr. Anson and Madame Dolaro, though scarcely deserving the enthusiastic praise which has in some quarters been bestowed upon it, is nevertheless genuinely artistic in many of its details, and reflects great credit upon the representatives of the old Frenchman and the débutante.

Sweet Bells Jangled, played at the Olympic, has for its subject the suffering of a bride who in consequence of a mistaken identity is driven to suspect her newly-married husband of bigamy, and is restored to the senses of

which she is bereft on her supposed discovery by a psychological stratagem akin to that so effectively employed in *Marcel*, which was it will be recollected successfully adapted as *Tears, Idle Tears*, for Mr. H. J. Montague, with small pretensions to literary excellence. *Sweet Bells Jangled* was marked by considerable knowledge of the requirements of stage construction —a quality not so discoverable in Mrs. H. Vaughan's *Mated*, recently given at a Criterion matinée. This little comedy, however, in spite of its erudities, pleased by its pretty love-scenes and lively dialogue.

IN THE PROVINCES.

THERE were fewer events of importance in the country during the month of July than is usual even in this part of the year. Mr. Barry Sullivan, wearied, is taking a temporary rest; and at the beginning of the month Mr. Toole thought fit to follow his example. The records of the month, however, are not entirely destitute of interest. Towards the end of June Miss Bateman appeared at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, as Mary Warner and in other characters. The *Daily Post*, speaking of her prison scene in Mr. Tom Taylor's play, said, "Imagination fails to conceive anything finer. It is an overwhelming display of blended rage and pathos. In the later scenes the effects are softer, but they are not less instinct with power. The scene with the child was, as usual, a most moving piece of acting." Then came Mr. Emmet in *Fritz*, a piece which, in the words of the *Daily Post*, could not lose its hold on public favour while he retained his bright expression, his pure pathos, his delightful sympathy with childhood, and his curious resources of ability as a singer and musical performer too. Mr. Terry, after completing his engagement at Liverpool, proceeded to Dublin, thence to Belfast, and thence to Edinburgh. The *Scotsman*, in common with other papers, bears witness to his power in Jeames of keeping a piece moving with unflagging spirit. *Carmen* was produced at the Prince of Wales's, Liverpool, for the first time in English on the 7th, with Miss Soldene in the title rôle, and Signor Lèli as Don José. Miss Soldene had the disadvantage of a comparison with Madame Trebelli, but her rendering of the part gave satisfaction to a crowded house. Mr. Joseph Eldred succeeded Miss Soldene, with *Little Amy Robsart*, *One Thousand One Hundred Pounds*, *Little Emily*, &c. Mr. Vernon and Miss Swansborough continued their tour with *Mammon* and the *Snowball*, everywhere meeting with a most cordial reception. In the course of their peregrinations the *Truth* company found itself at Manchester, where, thanks to the energy with which the equivocal character of the play was denounced by the press, it attracted large audiences. Miss Carlotta Leelerq, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Leitch, and the *Caste* and *Stolen Kisses* company were also on tour.

IN PARIS.

THE summer has come, but during the past month three or four new pieces have claimed attention. The first of these, *Lauriane*, a comedy

in three acts, by M. Louis Leroy, was brought out at the Gymnase, the manager of which usually relies upon a quick succession of novelties to tide him over the summer. The play is effectively conducted and brightly written, but its chances of success were destroyed by the improbability of the plot. In effect the author requires us to believe that a young Parisian lady of fashion can be so far ignorant of the world she lives in as to nearly break her heart because her husband has had a mistress some time prior to his marriage. This husband is one Raoul de Montals, and the wife the Lauriane of the piece. Their wedding and the festivities incident thereto over, the mistress, an Italian countess, follows them to their hotel and sends to the bridegroom a request that he will grant her a brief interview at her house, in order that he may receive with his own hands the letters he has written to her. Raoul, in order to avoid an annoying exposure, proceeds to the Countess, who then has some of his letters delivered to the bride with an intimation as to where he is at that moment. Lauriane immediately returns to her father's home, but at the end of about six months is induced by a report that Raoul intends to commit suicide to forgive him. It is hardly necessary to add that a piece with such a plot as this did not succeed, notwithstanding its literary merits and the acting of M. Guitry and Mdlle. Lesage as Raoul and Lauriane. Just before its *clôture* the Opéra Comique revived *Lalla Rookh*, in which the new actress and singer, Mdlle. Fauville, confirmed the favourable impression created by her performance in *La Flûte Enchantée*. The Cluny has achieved great success with a long vaudeville by MM. Grangé and Emile Abraham, *Les Vacances de Beauteaudun*. This Beauteaudun is a prosperous ironmonger, who in the course of a summer trip to Switzerland and Spain meets with a variety of misfortunes, such as the abduction of his daughters by and their marriage to young men of whose advances he disapproved. The piece is intensely amusing, and is acted with considerable humour. The last novelty at the Troisième Théâtre Français, *Le Chapitre des Femmes*, ought to have been kept where it is said to have been for many years, in the manager's bureau.

IN BERLIN.

THE Royal Playhouse being closed for the summer vacation, and the companies of the other leading theatres having also discontinued their labours for a time, we should have little to record this month but for the fact that Berlin has been enjoying a visit of some of the more prominent members of the Vienna Burgtheater, the Comédie Française of German-speaking theatres. On the 3rd July Herr and Frau Hartmann and Herren Sonnenthal and Thimig opened an engagement at the Wallner Theatre in Herr Michael Klapp's four-act comedy, *Rosenkranz und Güldenstern*, the most successful novelty of the past season at the Burgtheater. The plot of the comedy was described in our pages last January on the occasion of its first production in Vienna. Prince Liebenstein has a son, Count Ernst, whom he has brought up on the strictest principles, but whom he wishes to sow his wild oats before marrying a highborn lady to whose parents the prince has made

overtures on behalf of his son. The prince selects a certain Baron Rosenkranz to accompany the young man on a foreign tour, and Güldenstern is adopted as the travelling name of the count, who is to preserve a strict *incognito*. The prince instructs Rosenkranz to let his companion see life but to keep him away from people connected with the stage, of which the prince has a perfect horror on account of his sister having made a *mésalliance* with an actor. The adventures on the journey are amusing, and they end in the union of the count and his cousin, the daughter of the despised actor. The bright dialogue of Herr Klapp, to which full effect was given by the Viennese guests, atoned for the poverty of the plot, and the play attracted good houses for several evenings. On the 5th July other members of the Vienna Burgtheater—Herr and Frau Mitterwurzer, Herr Hallenstein, &c.—opened an engagement at the Residenz Theater in the *Haus Darnley*, a German version of Lord Lytton's *House of Darnley*, which was another of the novelties of the past season in Vienna. Herr Mitterwurzer plays here the part of Darnley, which was taken by Herr Sonnenthal in Vienna, and Frau Mitterwurzer plays Frau Hartmann's part of Miss Placid; while Lady Juliet, originally played by Frau Janisch, is here represented by Fräulein Strassmann, a comparatively inexperienced actress. The cast was thus hardly equal to that of the first production of the German version, but the piece was well received, though the critics have not been slow to recognise the demerits which rendered the original so unsuccessful when it was produced at the London Court Theatre. Guests, too, are the order of the day at the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt Theatre, where the members of the Gärtnerthor Theatre of Munich recently introduced to the Berlin public a popular piece in the Bavarian dialect, entitled *De' Zwiderwurz'n*, founded upon a novel of Hermann von Schmid. The plot is very similar to that of George Sand's well-known story *Fanchette*.

IN VIENNA.

THE Burgtheater closed its doors as usual on the last day of June for the summer vacation, and as the performances at the Carl and Fürst Theatres, the only houses now open, present no very noteworthy feature, we propose to devote our space this month to a review of the past season at the Burgtheater. The season lasted from October 1st to June 30th, and during its course no fewer than 122 pieces were performed, a number exceeding that of the whole current répertoire of the Comédie Française. Of this vast number of pieces only six were new to this stage. The most successful of the novelties was Herr Michael Klapp's *Rosenkranz und Güldenstern* which was performed twenty-five times, a long run for a house where the répertoire is so extraordinarily varied. Next in the order of success comes the *Johannistrieb* of Herr Paul Lindau, produced at the Berlin Royal Playhouse in the previous season with great success, and which was given here seventeen times. German versions of Lord Lytton's *House of Darnley* and of M. Pailleron's *L'Age Ingrat* (*Spätsomer* was the title of the German version) met with little favour, and the remaining novelties of the season—

Die Ehestifter by Herr Roderich Anschütz, and *Die beiden de Witt* by Herr Ferdinand von Saar—were failures. Turning to the old drama, Shakspere was played to an extent which shows how strongly our great dramatist continues to maintain his hold upon the stage in German-speaking countries. Twelve of his plays were given during the season—namely, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As you Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV.*, parts 1 & 2, *Henry V.*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Richard III.*, *The Tempest*, and *A Winter's Tale*. Most of these plays were performed only once or twice, but *Antony and Cleopatra*, which was a revival, was given eighteen times. Nor were the classical dramatists of Germany neglected. Five of Goethe's plays were given, of which *Götz von Berlichingen*, newly revived, was played six times; seven of Schiller's plays were given, his *Don Carlos*, which had for some time been absent from the stage, occupying the programme on seven evenings; while two of Lessing's plays, *Emilia Galotti* and *Nathan der Weise*, and Kleist's *Käthchen von Heilbronn* complete the brilliant list of classical German plays comprised in the work of the season. Of what we may call the modern German repertory, as distinguished from the classical, we find that forty-two pieces were given during the season; in this category we include works of Benedix, Bauernfeld, Gustav Freytag, Brachvogel, and even living authors, such as Wilbrandt and Doczi. Though the present manager of the Burgtheater does not borrow largely from the contemporary productions of the Paris stage, he does not neglect the French drama, and we find that no fewer than thirty translations or adaptations of French plays were performed during the past season. Of these the most frequently acted was Molière's *Malade Imaginaire*, which, under the title of *Der eingebildete Kranke*, seems to have become quite naturalized here, and which is the only French classical piece comprised in the list. Herr Sonnenthal's fine acting of the part of old Risler has preserved M. Daudet's *Fromont junior und Risler senior* on this stage, where it will probably maintain its place long after the frequenters of the Paris Vaudeville have forgotten its very existence.

IN MILAN.

THE opera season at the Dal Verme Theatre came to an end in the last days of June. The exceptional talents of Signora Galletti shed a lustre over many of the performances, and she was not the only artist who gained the favour of the public. Signorina Teodorini showed uncommon capacity, both as a singer and as an actress, in the difficult title rôle of Halévy's *Elrea* (*La Juive*), and Signora Bosio's singing created a sensation. Towards the end of the season a new opera entitled *Matelda*, the first work of a young composer, Signor Scontrino, was produced and only sustained two performances, the failure being due to the singers, and not to the score, which was admitted to be of considerable merit, while the libretto, written by Signor Marenco was good, though perhaps rather conventional. Owing to the indisposition of Signorina Teodorini, one of the principal parts was intrusted to another lady, who was in a great measure responsible for the

failure. It is said that the manager intends to give Signor Scontrino's opera another chance at the beginning of his next season, and the musical critics predict a success for it when produced under happier auspices. At the beginning of July the Dal Verme Theatre, which is so spacious and well-ventilated as to be specially suitable for summer performances, was re-opened by Signori Ciotti and Belli-Blanes and their excellent dramatic company. The managers are both actors of well-established popularity, and have enlisted in their *troupe* some very promising artists. Signor Andò, a good-looking youth, with a fine voice and no lack of intelligence; Signor Bozzo, a comic actor of much originality, and Signorina Gritti, a pretty blonde with lady-like manners but somewhat artificial style, are amongst the most prominent of the members of the company. The season opened with a very satisfactory performance of Signor Paolo Ferrari's *Cause ed Effetti*. On subsequent evenings the same author's *Goldoni* showed Signor Ciotti to great advantage in the title-part, while Signor Bozzo played Tita, the prompter, in exhilarating style, and *La Contessa di Sommerire*, a translation of Barrière's similarly-named drama, gave Signorina Gritti an opportunity of displaying her command of passionate expression, the performance being calculated to raise good hopes as to the future of this young actress. The only novelty yet given was a drama, in five acts and in prose, by Signor Castellazzo, entitled *Tiberio*. The action turns upon the execution of Sejanus, which in defiance of chronology the author places before the death of Livia, and upon Antonia's efforts to avenge the death of Drusus. The drama is written in most inflated style, and utterly failed to interest the public.

IN MADRID.

THE dull season has arrived. Most of the theatres are closed, and those which remain open are, with one exception, devoted to a class of entertainment which does not deserve our attention. Sleight-of-hand flourishes while dramatic art is reposing. The Teatro de la Alhambra is the only house that continues to offer a programme of any interest. The sisters Ferni, already favourably known to Madrid by their performances at the Teatro Real, and Signor Giraldoni, opened an engagement at the Alhambra towards the end of June in Pacini's *Saffo*, in which Teresina Ferni gave a remarkably fine impersonation of the Greek poetess, equally admirable from a histrionic and a musical point of view. The critics can hardly find language strong enough to express their admiration of the majestic grace with which she wears the ancient Greek costume and the power with which she expresses grief and despair. Her elder sister, Carolina Ferni, found good scope for the display of her fine contralto voice in the part of Cliniene; and the two sisters sang a duet in the second act in a manner that excited real enthusiasm. The tenor part was allotted to Signor Brunetti, a young singer who has much to learn, but shows promise. Signor Giraldoni strengthened the cast by taking the part of Alcandro. *Saffo* has been produced merely as a stop-gap pending the production of a new work, entitled *El Violin del*

Diablo, expressly written for Carolina Ferni, and which will not make such severe demands upon the resources of the house as Pacini's opera, to the adequate representation of which, as regards orchestra and chorus, the Alhambra was hardly equal, though the result was better than might have been expected.

IN NEW YORK.

THE last mail brings advices to the 10th July. Miss Cavendish, whose appearance at Wallack's Theatre has already been chronicled, did not create a very deep impression as Rosalind or Julia, but the ground she lost was more than recovered when, early in June, she undertook the character of Miss Gwilt. Her success was such that had she been able to make her essay at a more propitious season it would have been to her advantage; as it was, she had to cease playing at the end of the month. The Grand Opera House, the Broadway, the Union Square, and the Madison Square theatres are closed; but *H.M.S. Pinafore* retained its popularity at the Lyceum sufficiently well to keep that house open. The season just concluded has not, on the whole, been very remarkable. No new American actor or dramatist of distinction has appeared, and but two good American plays, *The Banker's Daughter* and *Old Love Letters*, have been brought to light. The *Times* thinks that the taste for prurient forms of entertainment is rapidly diminishing, and that the ill-digested species of drama represented by *Pauline* has become a crying offence. Another good indication, which promises well, is the fact frequently observed that although the audiences care for little else than ephemeral amusement they wish this amusement to be artistic.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

THE death of Lady Waldegrave has occasioned deep sorrow in other than political circles. The daughter of John Braham, the singer, she was proud of her parentage, and more than one member of her father's profession was bidden to her almost historic receptions at Strawberry-hill and Carlton-gardens. Mr. Sala says he remembers her a graceful, fair-haired girl, just forty-three years ago, sitting in a pit box at the St. James's Theatre, of which her father was then proprietor and manager.

THE opera season over, Madame Patti goes to Wales, and Madame Nilsson with Madame Marie Roze, to Mont d'Or.

Coriolanus, it is rumoured, will shortly be revived at the Lyceum Theatre, Mr. Alma-Tadema designing the scenery.

IT is probable that in the coming winter *Le Roi s'Amuse* will be revived at the Théâtre Français, with M. Got as Triboulet, Mdlle. Bernhardt (if she remains at the theatre) as Blanche, M. Mounet-Sully as the King, and M. Maubant as Saint-Vallier.

DURING the summer Mr. Irving joins a party invited by Lady Burdett-Coutts to accompany her on a cruise in the Mediterranean. This year, we believe, he will not make a tour of the provinces, but re-open the Lyceum earlier than usual.

NEXT January Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft will leave the Prince of Wales's and take the Haymarket Theatre. Mr. Bancroft has long had his eye upon the latter establishment.

MR. HARE, who, as we have already stated, has become the lessee of the St. James's Theatre, in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, was extremely angry on hearing of the move Mr. Bancroft intended to make. However, there is no reason to believe that the St. James's will suffer by the competition.

THE *Bourgeois de Pontarey*, it is understood, will be produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre on the 27th September.

M. VAUCORBEIL is now in possession at the Paris Opéra.

THE forty-two performances of the Comédie Française, we are officially told, yielded a sum of £19,805. 14s. 6d. The thirty-six night presentations produced an average of £470 for each representation, and the six matinées produced a similar average of £466, the general average for the forty-two representations being £472. The largest "house" was £571, when *Hernani* was played, and the smallest £349, when *Tartuffe* and *La Joie Fait Peur* were played. The *Sphinx* was played three times to an average of £532 each representation. The performances of *L'Avare* and the *Femmes Savantes*, supported in each case by *L'Etincelle*, produced respectively £471 and £479. *L'Ami Fritz* produced nearly as much in one representation as it produced in one week at the Gaiety Theatre in 1877, the chief character in each case having been represented by the same actor.

THE inscription in Wellington-street, "stage door," puzzled the company a good deal when they arrived. There was a general agreement that it meant "golden age" (*âge d'or*), and M. Mounet-Sully thought the compliment was very graceful.

THE Prince of Wales, going behind the scenes at the Gaiety one evening, asked Mdlle. Bernhardt to give him the little malacca cane which she has carried for the last seven years. The actress at once did so, and in return has received another of exquisite workmanship.

THE failure of Mdlle. Bernhardt to appear at the Gaiety on the 13th June was regarded in so unfavourable a light by the French Minister of Public Instruction that he telegraphed to the company to return to Paris at once, and would certainly have adhered to the order if M. Got had not pointed out to him that compliance with it would involve a breach of faith towards the English public and lower the credit of the company.

IT was just as a rehearsal of *Davenant* was about to commence that Mdlle. Bernhardt gave in her resignation. M. Got, who, as *doyen* of the company, was selected to receive it, seemed, we are told, "as though a domestic affliction had befallen him."

THAT Mdlle. Bernhardt is anxious to go to the United States there can be no doubt. One evening, in a conversation with the London representative of the *New York Tribune*, she said her visit would not be later than the year after next, perhaps even next year.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT'S *salon*, it need hardly be said, was literally besieged. In the form of a T, and lighted by two large windows, it soon assumed a pleasing appearance. There was a profusion of tapestry and flowers, with an engraving of Mrs. Siddons, a photograph of M. Bastien Lepage's portrait of the hostess, and a medallion by Mdlle. Abbéma.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT told a friend last autumn that before the end of the year she would be able to speak English fluently. Her English studies have not gone far as yet, although she can repeat the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth* fairly well. An American journalist heard her speak a few words at the private view of her sculpture to a Briton who would not venture upon French. She listened with a puzzled look to his polite address, and replied in English, "You speak too quickly." She evidently had only half understood, but her own phrase was uttered with a singular purity of accent—that is, without anything of what is commonly called accent. M. Sarcey urged the company to speak more slowly while in England, especially in reciting verse.

THE Prince and Princess of Wales, paying a visit to Mdlle. Bernhardt's exhibition, purchased "La Dormeuse" and commissioned her to execute a piece of statuary. The actress is now engaged upon a bust of Lord Beaconsfield.

THE Piccadilly exhibition, we understand, has yielded the actress a profit of more than £500, so great was the interest it excited.

THE bust near which Mdlle. Bernhardt is standing in the portrait we published of her in our June number is one of Mdlle. Louise Abbéma, the painter.

THE dressing-rooms at the Gaiety seem very small when compared with those of Parisian theatres, and complaints as to want of due accommodation were made. Mr. Hollingshead said they had been occupied without a murmur by Mr. Mathews, Mr. Toole, and Mr. Irving, to say nothing of others. That, of course, settled the question.

PLEASING amenities. Mr. Irving has presented M. Delaunay with a small snuff-box made out of the wood of Shakspere's mulberry tree and inlaid with gold, and has received in return a gold seal.

MDLLE. MARTIN liked London so well that she soon determined to have an English device, and after mature reflection hit upon "Times is money." We await Mr. Tom Taylor's explanation.

THERE has been quite a little tiff between the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review*. The former, in noticing the performance of *Tartuffe*, bestowed high praise upon Mdlle. Samary for her acting as Dorine, and spoke of the progress she had made in her profession. The *Saturday* declared that the part was played by Madame Dinah Felix. The *Spectator* published a letter from M. Mayer, stating that the actress in question was Mdlle. Samary. The *Saturday* referred to M. Delaunay, who, as Semainier on the occasion, authoritatively stated that the actress was Madame Felix. The *Saturday* was in the right.

M. FEBVRE has prepared for the Prince of Wales an album containing portraits of the *Enfants de Molière*, and a letter to his Royal Highness from M. Dumas. Prior to his departure the actor left a copy of the book with every prominent English confrère, with a letter asking that if it were retained the sum of five guineas might be paid for it. The book would be dear at half-price.

MDLLE. DUDLEY received the part of the fils de Shakespere only eight days before the performance of *Davenant* took place.

THE company, including Mdlle. Bernhardt, have returned to Paris, but their theatre has not yet been reopened.

MR. IRVING, we hear, had a tract against the theatre sent him the other day, with an earnest exhortation to abandon the stage and "prepare for the life to come." Similar tracts are now being largely circulated by the Dissenters.

MR. J. W. DAVISON, we are pleased to find, is now well.

THE sun never goes down on the Queen's dominions. "No," Mr. Gilbert is reported to have said, "Heaven is afraid to trust an Englishman in the dark."

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD, who was engaged by cable, by M. Bertrand, to go to Paris and appear as Queen Katharine in a French version of *Henry VIII.*, found upon her arrival that nothing had been done, and that it was proposed to do everything in two weeks. She very properly refused to risk her reputation by appearing under such circumstances, and the production of the piece has been deferred until December.

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN, who has just been created a Musical Bachelor at Oxford, is a very great favourite with the undergraduates there. At the granting of degrees the other day, the chief event was the descent from the upper gallery of an immense pinafore. Then followed from the undergraduates one of the most popular of the *Pinafore* choruses, which was received with tremendous and general applause, checked, alas! in the bud by a stern proctor. Mr. Sullivan, we regret to add, is far from well.

MR. BYRON was once knocked up at an unconscionable hour in the morning by a friend. "Ah," he said, "a rose two hours later would have been quite as sweet."

BUMBLEDOM again! The vestry of St. George's, Hanover-square, lately declined on religious grounds to allow a statue of Lord Byron to be erected in St. James's-street. They have some excuse for their decision in the fact that their betters are equally bigoted. The Dean of Westminster has persistently refused to let the slightest memorial of the poet be put up in the Abbey. He does not, however, raise any protest against the honour accorded there to—among others of a similar stamp—King Charles II.

THE *New York Herald and Star* lately announced the death of Mr. Howard Paul—a mistake which was gravely imitated by all the other papers, except the *World*, on Monday and Tuesday. The *World* was saved by Mr. Stephen Fiske, who remarked that, as Mr. Paul had "never before done anything original," it was "very unlikely that he should have died three days before his wife!"

HAS it ever occurred to anybody that the reports circulated as to Mr. Toole's intention to build a theatre in London are only so many advertisements got up in the interest of that rising comedian?

NEVER put letters in an overcoat pocket! Last winter a thief was arrested in Paris with M. Maurice Grau's overcoat on his back. Upon his being searched a note from Mdlle. Paola Marié and a letter from M. Capoul were found in the pockets. The lady's note—but really this is no business of ours.

MR. DILLON is sensitive to criticism. Not long ago the *Sheffield Independent* spoke of him as "an actor whose personations of Shaksperean character are well nigh ridiculous, and often amusing." The tragedian thereupon published an angry "card," stating that his performances had been well received, and quoting testimonials as to his histrionic excellence.

THE London correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner* telegraphed to his paper, on the 23rd June, an account of Madame Gerster's "first appearance in *Dinorah*." "Her acting and singing," he said, "were splendid, and evoked an amount of enthusiasm rarely seen." Unfortunately, the performance had not taken place at all. Madame Gerster being ill, *Rigoletto* was substituted at the eleventh hour for *Dinorah*.

MR. HOWE is enjoying a holiday in Normandy. He is now the oldest member of the Haymarket company, but the very youngest actor attached to that theatre would probably have found himself considerably distanced the other day by the veteran in a brisk walk between Dieppe and a village three leagues away.

THERE is nothing new under the sun. The *Pinafore* joke, "Never—hardly ever," occurs in Persius. He says: "Quis haec leget? Nemo mehercule. Nemo? Vel duo, vel nemo." "Who will read this? Surely nobody. What, nobody? Well, hardly anybody."

Two agreeable portraits of Miss Kate Pattison as Lady Ingram in *The Scrap of Paper* have been published by Messrs. Window and Grove.

MR. COLEMAN, in a letter to the *Daily News*, states that during Signor Salvini's engagement at the Queen's Theatre in 1876 the receipts fell to £18.

"MOURNFUL sight, Byron," said a friend to the dramatist as a drunken fellow staggered past. "Yes," was the reply; "more 'n full indeed."

MR. BRONSON HOWARD has been to a fancy-dress ball as "Purity." Severe upon the other authors of *The Banker's Daughter* and *Truth*!

MR. GERALD DIXON's sketch, which forms the feuilleton for the present number, was suggested by Mrs. Browning's poem, "A Light Woman."

THE author of the clever parody in our last number on Mr. Gilbert's "Jester James" is Mr. Stephen Fiske.

LAST month, while Mr. D'Oyley Carte's *Pinafore* company were boating on the Avon, near Bath, the boat capsized, and Mr. Robert Ives and Miss Florence Hyde were drowned.

THERE is actually a professional journalist who believes that Mdlle. Bernhardt was specially engaged to play at the Gaiety Theatre, and that the company of the Comédie Française has been formed to support her. We refer to the London correspondent of the *Bath Herald*. In one of his letters he says:—"Her engagement by Mr. Hollingshead was not lacking in pecuniary munificence."

SOME days ago Miss Cary and Mdlle. Litta, of the Strakosch troupe, arrived late in Virginia City, and hurried without escort to the opera-house to sing. Having, as they believed, followed directions, they entered the court-house and marched through its corridors in search of the stage entrance. They reached a heavy door and knocked for admission. The man there declined to admit them, but volunteered to bear any message to their brother. "Great heavens!

what brother? we want to go upon the stage." "Stage!" echoed the man, "there ain't no stage to this 'ere jail, miss." "Jail!" screamed the two prime donne in B sharp, and both swooned.

MISS GENEVIEVE WARD has taken the Lyceum Theatre for the summer season, and will appear there in Mr. Palgrave Simpson's new play, *Zillah*.

THE Court Theatre will be reopened in September by Mr. Wilson Barrett with a version of *Fernande*, in which Miss Heath will appear. Mr. Coghlan and Mr. Anson join the company.

MISS NEILSON's engagement at the Haymarket concluded, *Money* will be played six times, the profits being set aside for Mr. Buckstone, who in the last performance will take his final leave of the stage.

MR. WILLS has written a new play for Mr. Dillon.

THERE will be promenade concerts at Her Majesty's Theatre shortly.

MR. CELLIER is setting music to the piece Mr. Burnand has written for the Opéra Comique.

MDLLE. KRAUSS, Mdlle. Heilbronn, and M. Maurel will appear in M. Gounod's new opera, the *Tribut de Zamore*.

A CLEVER young lady, the Baronne d'Hermoncourt, will appear under an assumed name at the Vaudeville in M. Sardou's new comedy.

THE Variétés will probably reopen with MM. Millaud and Hennequin's *La Femme à Papa*, in which M. Dupuis and Madame Judic will appear. The former has a double part.

M. BELOT has read to the company of the Châtelet the first five tableaux of his *Venus Noire*.

Charles II. is the title of a comic opera that will probably see the light in Paris next winter. M. Lacome is the composer.

Tricoche et Cacolet is to be revived at the Palais Royal. *La Perrugue*, a piece in one act, is also in rehearsal there.

MDLLE. THERESA is about to appear in a new piece.

MDLLE. FIORETTI, the dancer, is dead.

IT is proposed to build a theatre in Sophia, the future capital of Bulgaria, and a subscription has been started for the purpose.

HERR NESSLER's opera, *Der Rattenfänger von Hameln*, is accepted at most of the principal theatres in Germany.

MR. SOTHERN will shortly appear at New York in a new piece by Mr. Byron.

MR. DALY has taken the Broadway Theatre, New York.

MR. LESTER WALLACK lately played at San Francisco.

WALLACK'S Theatre reopens this month with a play in which Mr. Raymond will appear as Ichabod Crane.

MADAME MARIE ROZE will be one of the chief attractions at Her Majesty's Opera during the late autumnal season, commencing in October next.

M. MAUREL will not join the Imperial Italian Opera Company at St. Petersburg next season, having been engaged by M. Vancorbeil for the Grand Opéra, Paris.

MADAME ROSE HERSEE, according to the *Melbourne Argus* and other Australian journals, has made a brilliant success, both in Italian and English opera, at the Melbourne Opera House, and was announced to appear in the title-character of Bizet's *Carmen*, May 28th.

Literature.

CHARLES MATHEWS AND HENRY COMPTON.*

THE labour involved in the preparation of the *Dictionary of London* does not seem to have exhausted Mr. Dickens's energies. He has edited Mathews's unfinished autobiography, supplementing with it what was necessary to make it a life of the genial comedian from the cradle to the grave. The result is a delightful book, and its value is increased by reason of its containing copies of the sketch representing Mathews at the mature age of three in a clerical dress bestowed upon him by a friend of the family, the portrait taken of him four years after his appearance on the stage, and sketches of the various characters he assumed in *Patter versus Clatter*. Nevertheless, it is with a feeling of disappointment that we put it down. In writing his autobiography Mathews evidently believed that his private life would have more interest for his readers than his public career. He says but little of his acting or particular impersonations, devoting most of his attention to the intercourse he enjoyed in early life with Lord and Lady Blessington and other friends. Though a keen observer and clever writer, he seldom alludes to a contemporary player, and accordingly misses the chance of making his autobiography as fine a gallery of portraits as Cibber's *Apology*. He occupies a good deal of space with details already made known to us in his mother's biography of his father, but the most eventful period in his career, the twenty-five years which followed his adoption of the stage as a profession, is dealt with in a single chapter. In spite of these faults, however, the book will well repay perusal, and it is only right to add that Mr. Dickens has discharged his duties as editor and part biographer with skill and good taste. A *Memoir of Henry Compton*, we fear, has much less to recommend it. The authors, it is true, write with some discretion and force, enliven their narrative with a few diverting anecdotes, and never allow filial piety to carry them over the perilously thin line which separates just from extravagant eulogy. But, like Mathews, they leave almost untouched the very subjects on which they should have bestowed the most attention. They are comparatively silent as to their father's achievements on the stage and the distinctive character of his acting, preferring to acquaint us with his habits and peculiarities, the books he read, and his reasons for liking one author better than another. Doubtless a portrait would not be complete if such points were entirely passed

* *The Life of Charles James Mathews*: chiefly Autobiographical, with Selections from His Correspondence and Speeches. Two vols. Macmillan & Co.

A Memoir of Henry Compton. By his Sons, Charles and Edward Compton. One volume. Tinsley Brothers.

over, but why Mr. Compton's personal qualities should be dwelt upon to the all but complete exclusion of his public career it is difficult to understand. Nor have the biographers made effective use of the materials at their command. They wrote to some of their father's professional friends for anecdotes respecting him, and the letters sent in reply, instead of being interwoven with the narrative, are carelessly relegated to a sort of appendix. Indeed, their information is conveyed in so erude and undigested a form that if they were not Mr. Compton's sons we should be disposed to treat them as bookmakers.

Mathews's powers as an actor lay within an extremely narrow circle—light and eccentric comedy. Characters of serious interest were beyond his reach, and even in the region of broad humour he found himself at fault. But in the *emploi* with which his name is associated, and which, indeed, he may almost be said to have created, he stood without a rival. Briskness, vivacity, nonchalance, ease, finesse, these were his chief qualities as an actor, and they were conspicuous to the last. Mr. Affable Hawk, Sir Charles Coldstream, and Adonis Evergreen, to say nothing of other characters, may be said to have died with him. "Mathews," says Mr. Lewes, "was eminently vivacious; a nimble spirit of mirth sparkled in his eye, and gave airiness to every gesture. He was in incessant movement without ever becoming obtrusive or fidgetty: a certain grace tempered his vivacity; an innate sense of elegance rescued him from the exaggerations of animal spirits." Many of his pieces, as his editor points out, presented but one type of character, but how good in itself and admirably played the part was! "My only aim," he once said, "is the agreeable and the natural. It has been urged against me that I always play the same character in the same way. This I take as a great compliment. It is a precision which has been aimed at by the models of my profession, and shows at least that my acting, such as it is, is the result of art and study, and not that of mere accident. To excite great laughter and obtain what are called great 'effects,' without regard to propriety and consistency, are not the objects to be desired by the artist, nor looked for by his audience." Like Edmund Kean, he preferred a small theatre, as he relied a good deal upon expression and delicacy of by-play. "To exaggerate my style," he would say, "would be to misrepresent it, and to bawl out speeches and to roar out whispers would only make the matter worse." In 1863, it may be remembered, Mathews played at Paris in French, and the success he achieved will afford strong testimony in the eyes of posterity that his acting was remarkable for brightness and finish. If not versatile on the stage, he was a man of varied gifts and sympathies, as an hour's conversation with him often showed. This autobiography, like his correspondence, is very pleasantly written; and his adaptations of French plays are characterized by remarkable skill.

His life is not without an element of romance. The son of a singularly clever comedian, he was educated with a view to the church, but commenced his career as an architect. In his nineteenth year he took part in an amateur performance at the Opera House, his success being such that if his parents had not been averse from the idea he might have become an actor by profession there and then. In his capacity of architect he attracted the notice

of Lord Blessington, who thenceforward took a warm interest in his future and but for whom he might have been killed in a duel. The society to which he was introduced by this genially lazy nobleman must have had a direct influence upon the style he was to acquire as an actor. Eventually, his father having died, he went on the stage, and in spite of an awkward deportment and delivery caught the eye of the town from the outset. Elated by his success, he embarked, in conjunction with his first wife, Madame Vestris, in two theatrical speculations. His good fortune now deserted him, at least for many years. Nothing he touched as a manager would turn into gold, and in course of time he found himself saddled with a heavy load of debt. The public believed that he was himself a sort of Affable Hawk, or at best, that he incurred extensive liabilities with the utmost recklessness, treated his creditors with jaunty indifference, and persuaded bailiffs to advance him the sum on account of which they had come to arrest him. This notion, which was not a little strengthened by the dashing air he had to assume in some of his characters, was correct as far as the bailiffs were concerned, but not otherwise. The heaviest blow of all was yet to come; one evening, on entering the Preston Theatre, he was arrested for debt, and for at least a month after that was kept in Lancaster Gaol. Made wiser by experience, he gave up theatrical management, and the good fortune he enjoyed in early life then quickly returned to him. His infinite vivacity seemed proof against the assault of time, and he remained on the stage until the last.

Mr. Compton was born at Huntingdon in 1805, his parents, by name Mackenzie, being members of the scholastic profession. It is worthy of note that one of his uncles, the Rev. Morell Mackenzie, perished with Elton in the *Pegasus*. "When all hope had to be abandoned," we are told, "he addressed his fellow-passengers in a firm, collected tone, reminded them of their danger, and engaged in prayer. All present knelt around him, while he, in the calmest manner, commended their souls to God, in whose presence they were shortly to appear. In this befitting manner he was engaged, all beside him fervently and audibly joining in the supplications, when the vessel went down." The future actor was educated at Huntingdon, and afterwards at Little Baddon, in Essex. Those who like to trace in the child the father to the man will be gratified to learn that at an early age he displayed a turn for mimicry. In his youth he was placed in the office of an uncle, Mr. Symonds, Western cloth merchant, in Aldermanbury, but after seeing Liston in *Paul Pry*, he manifested a strong *penchant* for the stage. For days and weeks, it is said, he would take possession of his uncle's sitting-room, and—umbrella, of course, in hand—imitate as far as he could that highly-coloured impersonation. Eventually, exchanging the name of Mackenzie for that of Compton, he became an actor by profession, although fervently exhorted by his uncle to remain in the City. For the next ten or eleven years he was a country actor, enduring with characteristic equanimity the vicissitudes inseparable from his vocation, and never losing a chance of increasing his knowledge and experience of the stage. Miss Robertson (Mrs. Kendal) tells us that on one occasion he was tramping from one town to another with her father and Mr. Chippendale; one of the party had but one shoe, and the other two actors agreed to walk by turns

without one in order that he might be no worse off than themselves. This anecdote reads like one from the *Roman Comique* or *Le Capitaine Fracasse*. In the course of his peregrinations Compton played Marall to the Sir Giles Overreach of Edmund Kean, and was so far affected by the terrible intensity of his leader's acting that he temporarily forgot his part. To the end of his life he declared that the great-little man had never been approached as a tragedian. In 1837 the young actor appeared at the English Opera House, as the Lyceum Theatre was then called, as Robin in the *Waterman*. Fortune thenceforward smiled upon him ; he soon established a metropolitan reputation, and Miss Emmeline Montague, estimable both on and off the stage, became his wife. The newly-wedded pair soon afterwards went on a short tour with the Guild of Literature and Art, the little company originated at Knebworth in 1850, and so closely associated with memories of Dickens, Jerrold, and Forster. For this company Lytton wrote *Not so Bad as We Seem*, which was played before the Queen and her husband at Devonshire House. The female characters in the piece, it seems, were very shadowy. "Madam," said the author to Mrs. Compton, "had I known the chief one was to be played by an actress I should have made it stronger." From 1853 until 1871 Mr. Compton was at the Haymarket Theatre, and during that period rose to a high place in his profession. On leaving Mr. Buckstone he went to the Globe, and in 1874 was engaged to play Sam Savoury in *A Fish out of Water* and the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet* at the Lyceum. His metropolitan career ended where it began, at the theatre in Wellington-street.

Mr. Compton won esteem on both sides of the footlights. His range as an actor was not very wide, but within that range he was unequalled. His acting was remarkable chiefly for dry humour, restrained by fine perception of character and a due observance of the laws of theatrical effect. His "quince-like" look and utterance, his peculiar insucking of the cheeks after each sentence, his imperturbable gravity in the drollest scenes,—all this and a good deal more are indelibly impressed upon the memories of those who saw him on the stage. His Ollapod and Oxeye were exquisitely diverting performances, but it was in some of the fantastic characters created by Shakspeare—as Touchstone, Dogberry, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and the First Gravedigger in *Hamlet*—that the style we have endeavoured to describe was seen to the best advantage. "Nothing," it was once remarked, "can be more excellent than Compton's Gravedigger. There is a deliberation about every action of the man which admirably illustrates the character. There is a thorough self-satisfaction about him which is not to be shaken. He lords it over his brother Gravedigger ; he congratulates himself on his keenness and power of shrewd repartee. When he propounds a riddle he does it with the air of one who is propounding an insoluble problem. All the pride of intellect of the old village coxcomb Compton portrays with infinite gusto. He drops his spade, proposes his riddle, and composes himself on his spade-handle with a triumphant look which expects not an answer, but a confession of ignorance. He is like a Dutch painter ; his details are elaborately accurate, and yet the whole is impregnated with that delicate sense of humour which is so charming and yet so rare." If,

instead of inflicting upon us a mass of uninteresting personal details, the biographers had quoted more matter of this description—and even better can be found—they would have done a service at once to the stage and their father's memory. In regard to Mr. Compton's private character, he was exemplary in all the relations of social life, and some of the anecdotes related of him show no inconsiderable humour and power of repartee. “Don't you think I am very good?” a vainglorious and shallow young actor once asked him. “Good!” was the reply; “Sir, ‘go’ is not the word!” “I am going to a fancy dress ball as a rattlesnake,” said a friend to him; “what do you think of the idea?” “Well,” said the actor, “I have no doubt you can make a noise, but how about the power of fascination?” Equally effective was his reply to an amateur comedian who had never made an audience laugh,—“Try *Hamlet*, and let me know how you succeed.” Not the least diverting of his verbal pleasantries is associated with the supper held at the Lyceum Theatre in celebration of the hundredth night of *Hamlet*. Fifty nights before and during the whole of that run he had played Sam in *A Fish out of Water*. “I beg to assure you,” he said in reply to the toast of his health, “how proud I feel at this celebration of the hundred and fiftieth night”—“No, no,” interrupted a neighbour, “the hundredth.” The comedian, after surveying the interrupter with a look of grave surprise and displeasure, went on, “How proud I feel at this celebration of the hundred and fiftieth”—more interruption—“night of the *Fish out of Water*.” This, of course, gave rise to a good deal of merriment, which was renewed before he sat down. “I take this opportunity,” he added, “of thanking my friend Irving for the really indefatigable support he has given me in the agreeable little trifle of *Hamlet*, with which, as you know, we are in the habit of winding up the evening.” The joke, however, was not always on his side. Many years ago he went with Jerrold to see some pictures at the Gallery of Illustration. In the building they passed some mirrors coming down to the ground. “There,” said the actor, striking an attitude before one of them and pointing to the reflection, “is a work of nature for you.” “Very fine,” said Jerrold; “wants hanging though.”

The Theatre.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

A GREAT DESIDERATUM.



O those whose position or occupation is connected with the stage few applications are more familiar than that of the young man or young woman who, for one reason or another, is anxious to enter the players' profession. It will frequently happen that the would-be *débutant* considers that with the attainment of a suitable introduction to a manager, with tolerably good looks and a fair share of good luck, the matter is or can be satisfactorily settled out of hand. With a friend to help him or her to make a start the only serious difficulty is thought to be overcome ; and the friend who will not or cannot give the assistance required is pronounced unamiable or incompetent, as the case may be. With this class of applicant the actor or dramatist, or critic whose aid is sought will have very little difficulty. He will have ready the cynical reply which suggests the comparatively excellent prospects afforded by the selection of a central crossing in a growing neighbourhood, the lofty protestation of his unwillingness to place himself under an obligation to any manager under the sun, the vague assurance that he will see what can be done, or the regret that the application had not chanced to be made to him a month ago. Occasionally, however, he will probably feel that none of these conventional replies fairly meets the case in point, and this not on account of any special regard for his correspondent, but by reason of the spirit in which the aspirant approaches his chosen career. It is one thing to be requested to procure for an acquaintance an opening in a pleasant and profitable profession ; it is another to have a legitimate demand upon our experience or special knowledge made by a beginner who is eager to fit himself for the exercise of his chosen art. Under the latter circumstances most people have a natural impulse to comply with a modest and reasonable request, and they are conscientiously desirous of doing their best, even though it be only by the gift of good advice.

And yet with the best intentions in the world we in England are

hopelessly puzzled to know how to counsel a youth who asks in what way to set about becoming an actor. We can give him a few obvious warnings, and we can point to some "shocking examples." We can tell him what to avoid; but what are we to tell him to do? A letter lies before us from a correspondent who writes from bitter experience, and whose description of two of the common courses—according to him the only courses—open to the stage-struck youth for the attainment of the end in view is worth consideration. "He can either join a company of amateurs, or he can enlist under the banner of some *soi-disant* teacher of dramatic art, who, in nine cases out of ten, is only an actor who is practically a failure in his profession. In the former case, the faults of style which somehow seem to form part and parcel of all amateur acting, become so firmly imbedded as to well-nigh defy eradication, or a slip-shod kind of performance is got into which clings faithfully to the actor long after he has chipped the amateur shell and appeared on the regular boards. I say nothing of the general ineffectiveness of these means to the end in view. If he adopt the latter alternative, he goes to a man whose conscience, or what is left of it, allows him to take a guinea or half-a-guinea a lesson, and who holds out glib promises of future engagements or assistance in procuring them—promises which never are, and never can, in the nature of things be realized. A part is selected for which the youth is supposed to be fitted, and a course of twenty lessons or so is found necessary for his instruction in the part. He is then allowed an opportunity of playing it in public, for which privilege he pays a sum varying from one to ten guineas according to its importance. If he can afford it he repeats the costly experiment till his purse fails him or his common sense asserts its rights. I need not say that the looked-for engagement never comes, and the youth departs sadder and wiser to await the mercies of a theatrical agent."

There is, we fear, far less exaggeration here than there may seem to the uninitiated to be. Cœlebs in search of an engagement, or of the experience to command an engagement, finds himself, to start with, in a vicious circle. Managers will not admit him to the stage because he knows nothing of stage-work; he knows nothing of stage-work because managers will not admit him to the stage. What he can learn from "amateur" acting is worse than nothing; what he can pick up, even from a competent "coach," is at best a mere superficial smattering, given without method, and of as little real value in dramatic art as it would be in the art of the painter and the sculptor, or in the science of the doctor and the lawyer. The poet who is born and not made must at any rate be so far "made" as to learn the grammar of his art, or he will remain a "mute inglorious Milton" for want of ability to convey to others the impression of his fancy's creations. Even where most depends upon an inspiration which cannot be manufactured to order, some "making" is needed; and in every art save that of the stage we know where to refer the beginner for the training which he needs. But while we can readily suggest the proper schools to be joined by a young musical genius, a promising draughtsman, or a clever modeller, we are at sea when we seek to place a boy or girl where a taste and a capacity for histrionic effect may be encouraged and trained to bear good fruit. It is nothing to

the purpose to point out that our stage boasts certain actors and actresses of the highest possible accomplishment ; they are what they have made themselves, in spite of the disadvantages which, in instances far less easy to number, have proved fatal to the attainment of anything like polished art. They have had the happy knack of studying without a master, and the determination to labour at the loftiest phases of their art, while for their daily bread they have practised its humblest developments. And even though the absence of anything like a college for the instruction of young actors and actresses has not prevented the rise amongst us of not a few of the finest players of the day, few will deny that to it are to be traced the salient faults and deficiencies of our stage-art as they strike unprejudiced observers.

To judge how much we lose by the lack of any institution for the systematic technical education of youths and maidens for the stage, we have only to consider for an instant the general drift of the comments made upon our current performances by a friendly critic such as M. Got, the *doyen* of the Comédie Française. M. Got's detailed references to individual representations, and his implied suggestions as to their relative worth, are necessarily robbed of any great intrinsic value by his admitted difficulty with the English language, and of this he is himself confessedly conscious. His general verdict, with regard to our performances taken as a whole, stands upon a very different basis. What evidently strikes him most forcibly is our absolute lack of general cultivation of the art of elocution, and he is led to compare the modulation, pronunciation, and voice-management of one of our political orators with the manner of speech employed by our actors ; and the comparison is distinctly unfavourable to the latter. No unbiassed person who contrasts the oratory of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright with that displayed by most of the players in a conventional revival of a blank-verse drama can fail to admit the substantial justice of this verdict. M. Got again notes, with the clear intention of being at once candid and courteous to his correspondent, that "if in the French school one may blame, perhaps with reason, the school itself, and consequently the conventionality rather too common to all, and of a uniform level, we have, at least, an unquestionable *ensemble*, whereas the English manner, inspired by the individuality and *self* of each necessarily conduces less to this *ensemble*, and sometimes leaves isolated those of the actors whom their individuality brings from the first into prominence." The blot which has often before been noticed in these pages is here hit with accuracy. It is quite unnecessary to discuss the faults which may be the result of the French school as it stands, and has stood for years. The fact remains that our leading defects spring from the circumstance that we have no school at all. With us, what is every one's business is, as usual, undertaken by nobody ; for the individual manager, unaided by State or by corporation, or by friendly legislation, cannot be expected to sink his capital in training pupils who may serve under another master when their term is finished, and will command, if they perform more than mere perfunctory work, salaries such as he cannot hope to pay simultaneously with the charges for the education of their successors. The training given at the Paris Conservatoire, whence spring almost all the *sociétaires* and *pensionnaires* of the Théâtre Français, is as radical and complete in its way as a

special course of study at the university. It has as little connexion with the "coaching" of a *débutant* in a single rôle to be tentatively performed in public as have the lectures of a college tutor with the lessons of a crammer whose object it is to enable an ignorant pupil to pretend he knows Greek or Latin because he can mechanically construe the book set for a test-examination. Of course the lad who is "crammed" may have the wit to think over his Virgil and his Thucydides for himself, may catch the spirit of author and of language, and may develop the intelligent student out of the mnemonic machine. But, on the other hand, he may not; and, similarly, the actor who has worked up the tricks of his trade as the circus-horse learns the tricks of the ring may or may not become the artist who studies his art in the spirit worthy of all art, whether on or off the stage. If, however, he does so upon our English stage it will be by his own almost unaided effort; and inasmuch as few of us are capable of study, apart from the guidance of a tutor, the result, naturally, is a combination of "stars and sticks" such as we have almost always to substitute, in our presentation of any standard classical drama for an even homogeneous performance of the play in a manner altogether worthy of a dramatic and literary effort which *ex hypothesi* is equal throughout. At a Conservatoire or training school like that which we need in London, not only the principles of elocution, so highly valued by the Greeks, would be taught; the young actor would learn the manners peculiar to different ages and to different conditions of society, just as in Paris he is taught such details as the manner of wearing the sword at the court of Louis Quatorze and that of Louis Quinze. He would be shown by the first players of the day why certain causes produce certain stage effects; why this habit is a mistake and that is all-important to success. He would, in fact, learn, not hap-hazard and piecemeal, from slow experience or from empiric instruction, but after the method in which all liberal education is imparted. Till an institution such as this is founded amongst us, it matters not whether by public or private agency, provided only that the teaching offered be worthy of the subject taught, it will remain a matter of impossibility to direct the stage aspirant into any channel which, if it be earnestly followed up, should lead to the attainment of a position on the stage at once honourable to the artist and valuable to the art.

A GAIN TO ART.

IN spite of the general outcry concerning the depression of trade, the dulness of a fashionable season cut short by mutual consent before its time, the scarcity of money, and the undefined dread of worse times to come, the report from the theatres is upon the whole satisfactory and encouraging. Managers flourish, playgoers are pleased, and there is every sign of an approaching campaign carried on behind the footlights with energy and enterprise. We need not allude in detail to the houses which prosper with abnormally long runs, to the managers whose success in small theatres

induces them to move to larger ones, to the new plays which have made hits, or to the old plays which have exhibited renewed vitality. At no time has it been more difficult than it was a month ago—in what is supposed to be the dullest season of the theatrical year—to secure even a brief tenancy of a central theatre; at no time has it proved easier than it was during the past spring and summer for a capable manager to secure a suitable return for his outlay of time, skill, and money. Especially marked is the success of the management which upon the whole aims higher than does any of its rivals; and if there is much to gratify Mr. Irving in the prosperous result of his labours, there is assuredly much that also deserves a welcome at the hands of those most interested in the development of our contemporary stage. This welcome the Lyceum season is by no means likely to miss, for Mr. Irving's many enthusiastic admirers have the courage of their opinions, and the actor-manager enjoys a popularity which makes itself felt as well as heard. But it will not be amiss to try to discover the meaning of his success, considered, so far as it may be considered, apart from the personal popularity of the actor himself.

We may indeed take it for granted that the wonderful return of £36,000 in thirty weeks implies something more than the continued public appreciation of Mr. Irving's share in the drama which he has set before us. He has, it is true, played his best, and has marvellously improved not a few of his familiar impersonations. So great, too, is the nervous vitality of the man that he seems able to throw off the inevitable cares of management the moment that he treads the boards, and he "doubles" without either effort or injurious effect the rôles of administrator and artist. Whether the strain must not sooner or later tell upon him if he continue to act every night after attending to necessary business every day may perhaps be doubted; but it is possible, or at any rate desirable, that as he gradually strengthens his company he may secure for himself more frequent rest. Mr. Irving has, however, done something more than act admirably in the many revivals which he has set before us. He has collected round him a company which, if it cannot be pronounced altogether worthy and free from weak places, nevertheless possesses individual elements of great power. Miss Ellen Terry, with her keen sense of dramatic poetry, her picturesque fascination, and her highly-finished art, may without exaggeration be called a host in herself. Her selection as chief actress was the happiest that could possibly have been made, especially as an indication that Mr. Irving did not commence management with any view of shining as a solitary star all the brighter for the lack of light in his immediate surroundings. We need not hesitate to point out what Mr. Irving might himself admit but for his sense of loyalty to chosen coadjutors, that in some respects his company might well be strengthened; something more than average mediocrity is now naturally looked for at the Lyceum, and in several instances only mediocrity is attained. But it must be recollected that the experiment at the Lyceum has scarcely yet emerged from its tentative stage, and the success which has so far been secured was needed in order to encourage more lavish outlay for the future. It is only judicious of the young manager to avoid hampering himself with a large number of costly engagements before he has gauged the

support from the public upon which he can fairly rely. The substantial appreciation of playgoers placed beyond a doubt, as is now the case, there will be nothing rash in employing all possible means to retain it ; and we may be sure that none of these means will for the future be neglected. In all other matters connected with the production of the plays chosen for representation the very highest standard has been aimed at, and every resource of wise and liberal stage-management has been pressed into service for the illustration of drama differing widely in era, in character, and in motive. *Hamlet*, as it is given at the Lyceum, is a perfect revelation to those familiar only with its conventional performance under the *régime* of the older school.

When we call to mind the class of plays upon which the Lyceum relies, we can scarcely fail to be struck by the change of public taste implied by the mere possibility of such a season, conducted in such a way to such an issue. Mr. Chatterton, who will probably be remembered as a manager chiefly by the epigram epitomizing his career, averred in all good faith that "Shakspere spelt ruin;" and he was accurate enough in his statement. Shakspere did spell ruin at a time when opera bouffe was in the ascendant, when poetry was dead upon the stage and amongst its votaries, and when intellectual people shunned the theatre. But, by the instrumentality of the Lyceum and by the efforts of its management, the leaven of brains, and taste, and culture, has been obtained to lighten the lump of playgoers, if we may be permitted to speak of them with such irreverence. Higher endeavours are understood and appreciated ; nobler studies are received with interest and criticised with intelligence. A new audience is attracted by a new school of dramatic performance ; and genuine excitement, neither short-lived nor affected, will be aroused by the announcement of a Shaksperean revival, a new play by a living poet, or a psychological experiment cast on the form of a drama. The manager of to-day has the ball at his feet, and the only question is how will he make use of his opportunities ? He has secured his patrons ; to what end will he employ their patronage ? He may aim as high as he likes now, without fear of being laughed at for his pains. How will he continue to satisfy those whom he has convinced of the real resuscitation of the poetic drama upon the London stage ?

In answer to questions like these, which force themselves upon those who have chanced to witness the enthusiasm of Mr. Irving's followers upon any important announcement that he happens to make from the stage, it need only be said that the promises of the Lyceum future are to the full as encouraging as is the retrospect of the Lyceum past. Without referring in detail to the play of Shakspere and the other works which are to be attempted, we may state that the new programme is to be fully worthy of the old. Good as well as attractive plays of a bygone period are to be presented ; the ablest of contemporaries are to be laid under contribution. There is no sign of a fatal rest upon the oars, no hint of a tempting reliance upon past achievement to win mere pecuniary reward without artistic enterprise. One of the best signs of the spirit in which the Lyceum is conducted is the readiness with which judicious innovations are adopted. Thus the system of long runs, against which, as we have already exhaustively shown, more is to be said than can reasonably be urged in its

favour, is disconcerted, and this although Mr. Irving could make it "pay" far better than could many of his brother-managers. The players are, as far as possible, to be kept out of grooves, and playgoers are to be encouraged to make many visits to the theatre during a single season.

It is a pleasant reflection, alike for those who have urged and those who have feared the establishment of a State theatre, that should Mr. Irving's prosperity last and should his endeavours retain their present direction, most of the good, with some of the possible evil, arising from any Government interference of the kind will be secured. The Conservatoire will, it is true, still be wanted; but it is hard to see how, in any subsidized theatre, we could confidently look for a worthier selection of plays, for more perfect stage-presentation, or for more earnest art than are given and promised us at the Lyceum. As the company obtains more capable recruits, as the manager is encouraged to bolder and more frequent changes of programme, as improvement after improvement is tested and adopted, in view of artistic perfection rather than of immediate gain, we cannot fail to secure many of the objects for which a State theatre has been desired without any of the evil consequences to be feared from interference with individual enterprise. Mr. Irving has only to go on as he has begun to make the Lyceum Theatre a national institution, not by a vote granted by Act of Parliament, but by the consensus of opinion amongst those who take most interest in our acted drama as it is, and who have most faith in its future development.

BENEFITS.

THE benefit performance is almost as old as the English drama itself. Early in the seventeenth century the sum usually paid for a play was £20—a fact which, regard being had to what Milton was to receive for his *Paradise Lost*, affords a pleasing proof of the comparatively high value set upon dramatic authorship at that period. The owner of the Rose Theatre, Philip Henslowe, although wealthy enough to become a pawnbroker as well as a theatrical manager, looked at every penny in his dealings with a dramatic author, and in order to avoid any risk in his theatrical business he thought it better to give the dramatist 12 down and the overplus of the second performance. The first play represented on these terms seems to have been the lettered and ever-needy Daborne's *Bellman of London*. The arrangement was approved by the authors, but in course of time they stood out on and obtained the third night's overplus as well. In the prologue to the *Sophy* a hope is expressed that if the audience disliked the play they would "make no words on't until the second day or third was passed." In the reign of Charles II. the third night only was set apart for the author's benefit, but in the course of a few years any dramatist who had established a high reputation could secure better terms, as is shown by the fact that Southerne took two nights' overplus, and Rowe no fewer than three. In the meantime, after

a long delay, a similar source of remuneration was opened to the player. King James II. was so impressed by the gifts of Mrs. Barry that he granted her what Cibber calls the "indulgence of an annual benefit play." In 1695, the patentees of the theatres being unable to pay the salaries, the actors agreed to take the proceeds of a special performance in lieu of what was due to them, and thenceforward would not enter into an engagement unless a night were set apart for their advantage. In the days of Henslowe, when, although Shakspere fretted and strutted his hour on the stage as the Ghost in *Hamlet* and Adam in *As You Like It*, the player was looked upon as a rogue and vagabond, it is probable that any application on his part for the overplus of a particular performance would have been followed by his ejectment from the company as a malapert knave.

From that time the benefit may be regarded as an established institution. Performances on behalf of an author or an actor were frequently announced. Betterton, Otway, Tom Durbey, Dennis, Bickerstaff, Farquhar, and Savage were among those who "appealed to their friends" in this way. The managers were not friendly to the system; they made the expenses as heavy as possible, and once endeavoured to levy a percentage upon the receipts. To make matters worse for the *bénéficiaires*, the house expenses, which in 1702 amounted to £34 a night, increased in a few years to about twice that sum. The playgoing world, on the other hand, became numerically stronger every day, and noble patrons of the drama gladdened the hearts of deserving authors and actors by handsome gifts. Betterton, it is computed, realized five hundred guineas by his last benefit, from two to ten guineas being paid by the beaux for tickets which the tragedian would have been pleased enough to sell at the ordinary prices. The theatre, in fact, was a resort of the aristocracy rather than a thing for the mass, and the professed patrons of the drama were few in number and individually well known. These circumstances had a material influence on the way in which the benefit system was worked. It was not enough for an author or actor to prepare a performance; he had to wait upon men of high degree and solicit their support. Mrs. Siddons, to whom even princes of the blood and statesmen paid deference, was once seen "walking up and down a street in a provincial town dressed in a red woollen cloak, such as was formerly worn by menial servants, and knocking at each door to deliver the play-bill of her benefit." If something of this kind were not done a public explanation was looked for. Before the performance for Mr. Bickerstaff's benefit came off he announced that as he was "confined to his bed by his lameness, and as his wife was lying dead, he had nobody to wait on the quality and his friends for him." Ryan, having been attacked and seriously injured by a highwayman on the eve of a similar occasion, "hoped his friends would excuse his not making a personal application to them." Eventually, the benefit nights were put off until the season was drawing to a close, and to bring anything like a good audience together it was found necessary to get up entertainments of a somewhat startling kind. The tragedian and the low comedian agreed to poach for a time upon each other's preserves. Mrs. Abington played Scrub; solemn John Kemble disported himself in low comedy; Mrs. Siddons appeared as Hamlet; Edmund Kean undertook to disappear, as

harlequin, through a trap-door ; Downton exchanged the part of Sir Anthony Absolute for that of Mrs. Malaprop ; and Liston and Keeley, the sight of whose faces was alone sufficient to set the house in a roar, endeavoured in all seriousness to play the Othello of Shakspere.

Nowadays the benefit differs materially from that of half a century ago. The author's night, to begin with, is a thing of the past. The author disposes of his plays on certain terms, and would never dream of making a special appeal to the public. The actor continues to have his "night" or "day," but his preparations for the entertainment do not involve so great a loss of personal dignity as of yore. He no longer calls upon the wealthy with a request to purchase tickets ; indeed, his admirers may be said to call upon him. If any canvassing goes on it is in comparative privacy. This change has in more than one respect a welcome significance. Not only has the popularity of the drama kept pace with the increase in the numbers of the people, but London, once all but inaccessible to the great body of countrymen, may now be reached from any part of the kingdom in a few hours, and the Parisian actor may come over here, witness a performance, and reappear in his *foyer* in a day and a quarter. In these circumstances, the theatre, instead of being a resort of a select few, as was the case a hundred years ago, has become a great national institution, and the individuality of the professed "patron of the drama" is lost in the thousands of persons who constitute what is called the playgoing public. Even if it were not so, however, the practice of touting for the sale of tickets would not be resorted to. During the last few years the social status of the player has materially improved. The old-fashioned prejudices against the stage and its votaries are dying out, and the claims of acting to a place among the fine arts are widely recognised. The player, therefore, has learnt to respect himself, and is not inclined to go round with what is virtually a begging petition. Indeed, we may expect that before long the "benefit" will be abandoned altogether by the more prominent members of the profession. No doubt it has some pleasing features, but its advantages can be purchased only at a certain sacrifice of the dignity of the recipient and his calling, and the sorry spectacle exhibited at the Haymarket Theatre a week or two ago illustrates this truth to a greater extent than any other we can call to mind.

Portraits.

XXVII.—MR. FECHTER.

BETWEEN fifty and sixty years ago a milliner's shop of a very unpre-tending character might have been noticed in Hanway-yard, now called Hanway-street, Tottenham-court-road. The presiding divinity in this little temple of fashion was an energetic little Englishwoman, who had undertaken the business for the excellent reason that the earnings of her husband, a sculptor from some town in Alsace, were not sufficient to keep the wolf from the door. In the autumn of 1823 she gave birth to the subject of this memoir, Charles Albert Fechter. Not long afterwards, finding they could not make way in London, M. and Madame Fechter went to Paris, where their son was brought up and educated. Intended for his father's profession, young Fechter conceived a strong taste for the stage, and on approaching man's estate appeared at the Théâtre Molière in *Le Mari de la Veure*. Among those who witnessed the performance was Saint-Aulaire, who, considering that it displayed rare promise, had him educated at the Conservatoire. In the mean time Mr. Fechter went with a travelling company on a tour in Italy. In 1845, as a successful pupil at the Conservatoire, he made a *début* as the Comédie Française in the *Ménage Parisien*, and for about eighteen months had the advantage of supporting Rachel in some of the plays with which her name was identified. He next took part in French performances in Berlin and London, making the acquaintance in the former city of the pleasing actress who soon afterwards became his wife, Eleonora Rabut. In 1850, at the Vaudeville, he was caught by the tide which carried him to fame and fortune. M. Alexandre Dumas fils, having come to the conclusion that social questions could be dealt with more effectively in plays than in any other form, brought out *La Dame aux Camélias*, in which, as everybody knows, he seeks to prove that those who are no better than they should be are often the mere victims of their own tender-heartedness. The play met with extraordinary success, and as a necessary consequence several dramatists followed the example of the audacious innovator. The inevitable reaction soon set in; Barrière and Lambert-Thiboust entered the lists against Dumas, and *Les Filles de Marbre*, among other pieces written with a similar object, gained the ear of the town. Mr. Fechter, whose powers as an actor were now all but matured, and who a short time previously had "created" at the Théâtre Historique the chief characters in *Les Frères Corses*, had the good fortune to represent the heroes of both *La Dame aux Camélias* and *Les Filles de Marbre*, and from this time occupied a prominent place in his profession. His industry was really intense; between 1848 and 1857 he played at six theatres and acquired nearly thirty new characters. In the autumn of 1860 he appeared at the Princess's Theatre, London, in an English version of *Ruy Blas*. His success was immediate and unequivocal. "Nothing," said *The Times*, "could be finer



THE THEATRE, NO. 14, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Oscar Foerster.

(AS HAMLET.)

of its kind than Ruy's declaration of love to the Queen, so exquisitely was the fire of passion tempered by the feeling of respectful devotion, and with such eloquence of speech and action were the words poured forth. The misery to which the virtuous impostor is exposed when his master suddenly reappears and compels him to play menial offices while he is still in the plenitude of his power—the terribly jarring conflict between the aspiring mind of the statesman and the bounden condition of the lackey—was represented with wondrous force and abundance of detail. But it was in the last act that the triumph of the actor reached its culminating point. From the moment when Ruy snatches the sword from his master's side (an action which of itself produced an electrical effect) to the fall of the curtain, when the valet dies happy in the conviction that he is loved not under false colours, but with the livery actually present to the mind of his royal mistress, Mr. Fechter had the audience completely in his grasp, and could do with it as he pleased." His accent and gesticulations were unmistakably French, but his articulation was both clear and musical. In the next character he essayed, Don Cæsar de Bazan, he confirmed the advantage he had gained. His reading differed greatly from those of his predecessors in the part. In the words of an acute critic, M. Lemaître's was the humorous, Mr. Wallack's the melodramatic, and Mr. Fechter's the chivalric version. The new-comer presented Don Cæsar as a gentleman, fallen, it is true, into low habits and driven by circumstances to be acquainted with strange bedfellows, yet in his lowest degradation retaining a vivid recollection of his original position. These and other impersonations gave Mr. Fechter a high place in public estimation. Nature had endowed him to a large extent with the physical qualities required in his profession; his acting was allowed to show warmth, picturesqueness, grace, keen sense of character, mastery of detail, and poetic sympathy. It remained, however, to be seen whether he possessed tragic passion, whether he could scale the heights or descend into the ravines of human emotion. In the spring of 1861 he gave the playgoer world a chance of making up its mind on this point. He appeared as Hamlet, perhaps the most arduous of Shaksperian characters. To us it seems that he did not pass through the ordeal unscathed. His performance, it is true, was marked in some passages by exquisite beauty of thought and expression, and as a whole by high refinement and taste. In all the lighter scenes he played with the ease and spirit of a typical French actor. His Hamlet, however, did not show the force of a great tragedian; it interested rather than moved the audience. A sense of his shortcomings in this respect, we presume, led him to take such a view of the character as would involve the least possible display of power. He gave undue prominence to the meditative element in Hamlet's nature. He concerned himself chiefly with the play of intellect revealed in the soliloquies, both long and short. The stronger passions, it was truly said, intrenched as little as possible on his solitude; the birth of thought was more visible than the influence of emotion. Now, the fate-driven and irresolute Prince is a very human being, though his mind often raises him to the skies. Mr. Fechter all but ignored this realistic aspect of the part, the consequence being that in his hands Hamlet enlisted far less sympathy than is his by right. "The merits and

deficiencies of Mr. Fechter," wrote Mr. Oxenford, "cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that the play-scene and the closet-scene are those with which he produces the least effect, whereas in the second act he makes a most powerful impression,"—a fact full of significance. In this performance, it must be added, Mr. Fechter disregarded all the traditions of our stage, and, after the fashion of German actors, indicated the nationality of Hamlet by wearing flaxen hair. In many of his innovations a hankering after originality for its own sake was perceptible, but it was not until he came forward as Othello that this unfortunate tendency can be said to have overmastered his judgment. In the senate-scene, on arriving at the words, "The very head and front of my offending hath this extent, no more," he so far forgot the simple dignity of the character as to advance with upraised hand to the senators, as though prepared to chastise any one who had the hardihood to allege the contrary. In the last scene he used to drag Iago to, and make him kneel before, the body of Desdemona. About Mr. Fechter's view of Othello in general we have nothing to say. He regarded the Moor as "more affectionate than impassioned, and, more logical than either." Far from being naturally suspicious, he did not grow uneasy until he had ample ground for distrust; and, consistently with the belief that he would not turn mad-jealous for a trifle, the character of Bianca, commonly omitted, was restored. Mr. Fechter was admirable in all expressions of tenderness, and from the beginning of the third act exercised a powerful influence over the audience. Mr. Fechter was now the most praised and best abused actor on the stage. He was loudly extolled as a man of genius or decried as an actor with at best a certain grace of ingenuity. Some maintained that he ennobled all he touched; others asked with Cicero, when he saw his son-in-law with a ponderous weapon, "Who has tied Dolabella to that sword?" The public, however, stood resolutely by him; and in the beginning of 1863, satisfied that his popularity here was well-established, he took the Lyceum Theatre. While there he appeared in several new plays—as Henri de Lagadère in the *Duke's Motto*, Fanfan in the *King's Butterfly*, Robert Macaire in the *Roadside Inn*, Leone Salviti in the *Watch-Cry*, Edgar in the *Master of Ravenswood*, and Maurice d'Arbel in *Rouge-et-Noir*. He also revived *Hamlet* in a manner which could not but attract attention. He sought to give an old Danish colouring to the piece, and to this end adopted Norman architecture and arrayed most of the characters in the thick red beards and coarse leggings and cross-garters peculiar to northern warriors. Here, we think, he threw away a good deal of time and money to no purpose. Shakspere evidently wished us to suppose that the legend on which he based the play was one of his own times. As we pointed out some time ago, the personages talk and think in an Elizabethan style; Hamlet himself is an incarnation of the intellectual agitation to which the Reformation gave rise, and modern instruments of warfare are alluded to. At the end of 1867, in consequence of heavy losses, Mr. Fechter gave up the Lyceum and took an engagement at the Adelphi, where he played Obenreitzer in *No Thoroughfare*, Edmond Dantes in *Monte Christo*, and the Count de Layrac in Mr. Wilkie Collins's *Black and White*. In 1868, it may be noted, Dickens and Fechter went to Paris together to superintend

the production of the first of these pieces at the Vaudeville of the Place de la Bourse, and a strong friendship sprang up between them. Early in 1870, Mr. Fechter left England for America, Dickens contributing to the *Atlantic Monthly* an article in his praise. "I cannot," said the novelist, "wish my friend a better audience than he will find in the American people, and I cannot wish them a better actor than they will find in my friend." Mr. Fechter made his first appearance in America at Niblo's Theatre, New York, early in 1870. His reputation as an actor of great power had preceded him, and the house was crowded. His impersonation of the hero of M. Hugo's play won high commendation, and so pleased was he with his American successes, that he determined to remain in the country. He made a tour throughout the country, his engagement at Philadelphia being particularly successful. In the same year he opened the Globe Theatre in Boston with a version of *Monte Cristo*, in which he assumed the title-rôle. The cast of the play was regarded as one of the best and most complete ever organized in America, embracing as it did the names of Mr. Wallack, Mr. Murdoch, Mr. Lemoyn, Mr. Stuart Robson, Mr. Pearson, Mrs. Chanfrau, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Mrs. Malinda Jones, and Miss Kitty Blanchard. His connexion with the Globe, owing to some unfortunate misunderstanding with the company, particularly with Mr. Wallack, was of short duration, and returning to New York he played for some time at the French Theatre. In 1872, after paying what proved to be his last visit to England, he took the French Theatre in New York, which, in memory of his success in London, was renamed the Lyceum. From this time fortune seemed to desert him. His attraction as an actor declined, his speculations as a manager resulted in heavy losses. This reverse may be attributed in some measure to a very painful incident. In 1874, although his wife was still living, he went through the ceremony of marriage with Miss Price, an actress very popular in Philadelphia. Madame Fechter, the Eleonora Rabut of a quarter of a century before, thereupon wrote to a Philadelphia journal, stating that she was married to him in 1847, and had had by him a daughter and a son. This daughter, Mdlle. Marie Fechter, has, we may here state, achieved some success at the Paris Opera; her brother, who acted at the Lyceum with his father in 1865, is at present a lawyer. "Our union," Madame Fechter added with simple pathos, "was long happy, but is now broken." Such a revelation could not but seriously impair his popularity, and a friend who saw him soon afterwards speaks of him as a soured and prematurely-aged man. In 1875 he met with two serious accidents, one by falling against a carriage, the other through a platform on which he had to stand in some play at a Philadelphia theatre giving way. After this he was uncertain in his engagements, often becoming too ill to play, and disappointing assembled audiences. On the 5th August he died at his farm at Richland, near Quakertown, Philadelphia, from distention of the liver, his last sufferings being alleviated by the assiduous attentions of his second wife; and in him the stage has lost one who, if not to be numbered amongst its greatest votaries, was one of the finest romantic actors the present century has seen.

The Round Table.

PLAYWRITING AS IT IS.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

IT will have been noted that of late how many pieces writ by good men and true have made shipwreck, no doubt to the wonder and disgust of the managers, who paid large sums on the faith of the name. Such a director, who has bought the "good-will" of a theatre much as he would that of a restaurant, proceeds at once to contract for a piece with the favourite writer of the day, and thus rests in the enjoyment of a pleasant faith in his success. "He's got the men, he's got the piece, he's got the money too." The policy, therefore, is safe. He is almost stunned, therefore, when the favourite writer fails to please, for he seems to think he had contracted for success as well as for the play. And, indeed, the sum given, being for the name, would warrant his honest faith. So does the *nouveau riche* or opulent vulgarian purchase his Château Margeaux and "Moulin" from his wine merchant, and is bewildered to find that no price will help him to rival the old baronet's cellars, stocked with exquisite taste and judgment, and with wine laid down a century ago. Nor is the public less surprised than the manager at the failure of the favourite writer. It is enough that it should be written by him. It is thought to be like ordering, say, a gun from Rigby or Henry, and that both "pieces" should be guaranteed to "go off" in the best fashion. Yet late experience of some curious results—failures of some of the eminent ones, more disastrous than those of the crudest tyro—show that the principle must be at fault. Without attempting directly to show where the fault lies, it may be sufficient to point out the fashion in which plays were written in the good old days, say under Mr. Garrick's management, when Messrs. Murphy and Colman were, like Messrs. Gilbert and Byron, the general favourite caterers.

Under that system it is astonishing to find how unceremoniously the popular writer was treated. Either of two courses was adopted. The author had a play ready, which he offered. It was read, considered with a view to whether it would suit the house and company, duly found fault with, and required to be altered and rewritten if such a process would mend it, or possibly declined with thanks, as unsuitable to the theatre. Or possibly the

author announced to the manager that he had an idea for a play,—something that would suit the several leading performers, and which he modestly submitted to the manager. On being encouraged he set to work, keeping the performers before his eyes, and submitting his work, act by act, until completed; the manager keeping step with him, suggesting alterations, improvements, and business. So much was this idea of its being specially written for the company that the author actually used the names of the actors as the names of his characters until all was completed, when a general rechristening took place. In this way the piece took shape and seemed to grow out of real life and action, actors, manager, and author all contributing a share and checking each other. This, indeed, is the secret of the vitality of Meyerbeer's grand operas, such as the *Huguenots*; for he did not, as Donizetti did, take a ready-made libretto and "set it," translating it into music, but shaped it as the music inspired him. And it is well known that the magnificent duet in the third act was conceived during the rehearsals, when one of the performers had the dramatic perception to see that the situation called for it, and the composer adopted the idea. At the same time, it must be admitted that the "ready-made system" is best adapted to what prevails in our day, when "short service" obtains everywhere, and when actors flit about and shoot up, like Mr. G. Conquest and his son, through "cellar flaps" in the most unexpected manner and in the most unlikely quarters. A fixed and permanent staff is necessary, so as to give the actors a position of advantage and power whence they can dictate such terms.

It is certain, whatever be the reason, that of late years no play showing real masterly grasp of character has been written. There are plenty of clever pieces written by clever men, but they touch superficial matters and do not show knowledge of human nature and character. Thomas Morton was not a great writer, but certainly no pieces of our time, in breadth of character, bold treatment, and natural gaiety, can be put beside his *Poor Gentleman*, *Speed the Plough*, or the *Cure for the Heartache*. No one would attempt to say that there are not men as capable as Thomas Morton to be found now, or who could display the same knowledge. The difficulty lies in this, that a certain labour and development of thought is required to produce such, and for this there is now no demand,—at least the more superficial form of entertainment is equally welcome. The caterer, therefore, provides what can be offered at the least cost. The mode of acting in vogue, too, does not favour the study of "breadth," little details and "accidents" being emphasized, and characters from the old comedies thus treated become thin and "scratchy." Mr. Brough and Mrs. Stirling in *She Stoops to Conquer* show what can be done in this way, but we could name but few who paint with the same broad brush. It would be curious to mark the stages and shapes of what enjoys public favour, and mark the transition from the tranquil pieces and the thin arrowroot provided by Mr. Robertson to the brisk scenes of rollicking fun taken from the French, which are now in vogue. It is only lately that actors have discovered that the way to make such pieces of overdrawn extravagance go down is to play them with a sort of serious earnestness, gliding over the caricatured portions. There can be little doubt that this will in time lead us

back to the broad lines of English comedy, for in English life, notwithstanding the uniformity of manners and dress that is now enforced, there is plenty of underlying weakness and absurdity.

THE DUTY OF AN AUDIENCE.

BY EMILY FAITHFULL.

A THEATRE is a place where a play is performed, and people go to the theatre to see a play. This is how the schoolboy would put it in a prize essay, and both statements would seem obvious enough; but the second is far from true in the present day. A very considerable contingent of the occupants of the boxes and stalls at the fashionable theatres seems under the impression that the performance on the stage is only intended as an agreeable accompaniment to conversation, like the band at a horticultural fête or a garden-party.

To begin with, these loquacious loungers come late. Their dinner-hour is not altered to suit the play or the public. So interested spectators are disturbed by the inevitable bustle of people entering the stalls in the middle of a scene. The rustling of ladies' silk robes, the discordant sounds which accompany the pulling back of curtains, banging down of seats, the sale of programmes, and the whispering of the box-keepers, are most provoking to those who have come to see the play. For the first hour, however, they must submit to the intolerable nuisance of people crushing past them and standing up between them and the stage. And as to the effect on the performers, why that is a matter quite beneath the consideration of these well-bred persons. The artists are paid to act, they have really no concern with what the public is pleased to do, especially the public that dines at 8.30 and is obliging enough to drop into the theatre about the middle of the second act of the piece of the evening. The vulgar people who show such exceedingly bad "form" as to be interested in a play, or interested in anything, ought to be thankful for the opportunity of gazing upon the "curled darlings" of male swelldom, or the besatined shoulders of Belgravian dames.

No indignant "sh—'s" will remind these vapid individuals that if they want to talk they could do it as well at home, and that their remarks, even if sensible—and they never are, or hardly ever—are not so interesting as the dialogue on the stage. It may be pre-eminently entertaining to the parties intimately concerned to hear that "Sir Harry is yachting in the Mediterranean," and that "Mrs. ——— looked quite too charming at the ball last night," but we who don't know Sir Harry, and didn't see the belle of the ball, would far rather hear what Polly Eccles is saying to Sam, and we have, we frankly admit it, the inconceivable bad taste to relish the tirade of Mr. Eccles upon the rights of the working man far more than the fashion-

able "Aw, indeed; really, how strange: you don't mean it," and all the other disjointed bits of conversation which fall from the lips of the spoilt children of fortune beside us.

The theatre is not the place for conversation, except between the acts. But here comes the time for inflicting another torture upon the genuine playgoers. *Il faut boire.* Such intervals are devoted to B. and S. and whiffs of cigarettes, for no dandy of the nineteenth century could possibly exist for two mortal hours at a play without such aids at every available opportunity. Accordingly at the end of every act they push past other people, returning with studied courtesy after the fresh act has commenced.

The ladies are by no means behindhand in proving how disagreeable so-called "well-bred people" can make themselves. A few nights before the closing of the Court Theatre, a famous society beauty, whose photograph is so well known that she obtains the ready recognition she is apparently so anxious to ensure, made herself conspicuous by draping her box with her white furry opera-cloak and talking to her companions in tones which were heard on the other side of the house during the performance of *The Ladies' Battle*. She not only ignored the stage in this fashion, but she positively turned her back on it during one of Mrs. Kendal's and Mr. Hare's most telling scenes. She was evidently anxious to make it apparent beyond all doubt that she did not go to the theatre to see and hear, but to be heard and seen.

Surely the obligation of the public towards their entertainers is not discharged by the mere money transaction that secures to the one a seat, and compels the other to perform certain pieces. Society would crumble if our dealings with our fellow-creatures were conducted on the hard-and-fast lines of contracts alone, setting aside all considerations of courtesy and good feeling. We pay our servants, and yet clothe our commands in the dress of politeness. We are not obliged to express in a theatre what we do not feel, but we are obliged, if we admit that courtesy is among the canons of good-breeding, to abstain from indifference so pronounced. We go even further, and assert that audiences when pleased should show their approbation frankly. They would be great gainers by affording such cordial encouragement. Artists are proverbially the most sensitive of mortals. They cannot do their best for lymphatic spectators; applause is to them like water to the thirsty, it puts fresh life into them. English audiences are painfully cold, and in fashionable theatres indifference is *chic*. The passionate enthusiasm of an Italian or Viennese house would be voted absurd by our languid youths and insipid maidens of the gilded order, and therefore it is to the pit and gods that the artists look for appreciation.

Silent indifference is, however, negative. No one has a right to meddle with people because they are too stupid or too affected to take an interest, or, if they take it, to show it. Talking is positive, and as it is insulting and annoying to both actors and honest playgoers, it ought to be put down. Behind the scenes notices are posted up requesting the artists not to speak in the wings during the performance of the play. A notice, "Talking is prohibited," might prove useful in the stalls and boxes, and we think one or two additions could be made. We would suggest the following:

"Gentlemen requiring constant refreshment are requested to return to their places before the curtain is rung up again, and not to begin searching for their hats and coats before the conclusion of the play."

THE POET OF ACTING.

By W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

THE reader must not suppose that he is about to be seduced into the perusal of an essay on the well-known author of *The Rosciad*. Churchill might, indeed, be called the poet of the stage, inasmuch as his most celebrated work is the most brilliant criticism ever passed in verse upon the actors of any generation. It was not, however, with acting pure and simple, with acting as an Art, that Churchill busied himself in his famous poem. He passed judgment on the performances of particular men and women, but he did not in any way attempt a poetical treatise on the ins-and-outs of histrionics generally. And this is the less surprising on his part that the publication of *The Rosciad* in 1761 had been anticipated by the appearance in 1760 of a work in which the attempt had been already made. That work was the production of his great friend, Robert Lloyd, and was called *The Actor*; a formal disquisition on the art of acting, addressed to another friend of Lloyd's, and written with all the authority of one who had been a student of the art and was acquainted with its requirements and capacities. Unfortunately, we have no means of testing the absolute truth of this assertion, for the particulars of Lloyd's career are still obscure; we can only assume, from the fact of Lloyd and Churchill both writing about the stage, that they had had experience as theatre-goers, whilst the best possible proof, perhaps, both of that experience and of their solid knowledge of the art, is to be obtained in the pages of the poems themselves, the intrinsic merit of which is easily recognizable by the reader. *The Rosciad* is tolerably well known, if not directly, at least by means of extracts; and most people are aware that in the course of it the author made a vigorous onslaught on many of the players of the day, somewhat in the same spirit, and very much in the same style, as Byron afterwards attacked the bards and reviewers of his time. On the other hand, *The Actor* is not known, partly because its author has not the widespread fame of Churchill, partly because the subject and the style are not so attractive, necessarily, as those of *The Rosciad*—actors and satire being, in the nature of things, more popular than acting and exhortation; and partly, it must be conceded, because *The Rosciad* is considerably more important than *The Actor*, regarded as a literary work.

Still, if for the general public *The Actor* is not so pleasing as *The Rosciad*, the former ought to be singularly interesting to the histrionic profession, to critics, and to lovers of the stage. And it ought to be so, apart altogether from its literary merit, which is great, if only because it is the only poetical

treatise on the art of acting which the whole range of our poetry affords. I am not sure that there is any such treatise to be found in prose ; certainly I know of no versifier who has attempted to do exactly or in any approximate degree what Lloyd has attempted in *The Actor*. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, to turn for a moment to the poem, and get some notion of the opinions and theories laid down in it. The work is, as I say, so far from being familiar or popular that I may be forgiven if I am tolerably liberal in the quotations which accompany my analysis. Lloyd begins by laying down the axiom, which will be exceedingly displeasing to the automatic actors of our day, that acting draws its perfection from no observance of mechanic laws :—

No settled maxims of a fav'rite stage,
No rules deliver'd down from age to age,
Let players nicely mark them as they will,
Can e'er entail hereditary skill.

The player's profession, he goes on to say,

Lies not in trick, or attitude, or start—
Nature's true knowledge is the only art . . .
To this one standard make your just appeal,
Here lies the golden secret : *learn to feel*.
Or fool, or monarch, happy or distress'd,
No actor pleases that is not possess'd.

He then proceeds to enounce that

The player's province they but vainly try
Who want these pow'rs—*deportment, voice, and eye*.

And first, in reference to Deportment,—

The critic sight 'tis only *grace* can please ;
No figure charms as if it was not *ease*.

We are taught to laugh at the unreal motions of the stock tragedian :— .

Theatric monarchs, in their tragic gait,
Affect to mark the solemn pace of state.
One foot put forward in position strong,
The other, like its vassal, dragg'd along.
So grave each motion, so exact and slow,
Like wooden monarchs at a puppet-show.

Unreal attitudes are especially derided :—

Unskilful actors, like your mimic apes,
Will writhe their bodies in a thousand shapes ;
However foreign from the poet's art,
No tragic hero but admires a start.
What though unfeeling of the nervous line,
Who but allows his *attitude* is fine ?

Attention is directed to one habit which would appear to have beeu a leading characteristic of tragedians a hundred years ago :—

When Romeo sorrowing at his Juliet's doom,
With eager madness bursts the canvas tomb,
The sudden whirl, stretch'd leg, and lifted staff,
Which please the vulgar, make the critic laugh.

A few lines further on we have a piece of censure, which is as applicable now, unhappily, as it was in those old days. Says Lloyd :—

Of all the evils which the stage molest,
I hate your fool who overacts his jest,

Who murders what the poet finely writ,
And, like a bungler, haggles all his wit,
With shrug, and grin, and gesture out of place,
And writes a foolish comment with his face.

And, still further on, the writer attacks a vice which was evidently particularly distasteful to him, for he refers to it early in the poem, namely, the vice of imitation :—

But let the generous actor still forbear
To copy features with a mimic's care !
'Tis a poor skill which ev'ry fool can reach,
A vile stage-custom, honour'd in the breach.
Worse as more close the disingenuous art
But shows the wanton looseness of the heart.
When I behold a wretch, of talents mean,
Drag private foibles on the public scene,
Forsaking nature's fair and open road
To mark some whim, some strange peculiar mode,
Fir'd with disgust I loathe his senile plan,
Despise the mimic, and abhor the man.

We now come to the Voice, concerning which the author first remarks that it is not enough it should be “sound and clear :”—

‘Tis modulation that most charms the ear.

“Desperate heroines” are not to “grieve with tedious moan,” and “whine their sorrows in a see-saw tone” :—

The voice all modes of passion can express
That marks the proper word with proper stress ;
But none emphatic can that actor call
Who lays an equal emphasis on *all*.

Equally objectionable to the writer is the measured elocution of one class of actors. Of these he says that they

Point ev'ry stop, mark ev'ry pause so strong,
that

Their words, like stage processions, stalk along.

Of those, again, who are jerky and eccentric in delivery, he says :—

In vain for them the pleasing measure flows,
Whose recitation runs it all to prose ;
Repeating what the poet sets not down,
The verb disjointing from its friendly noun,
While pause, and break, and repetition join
To make a discord in each tuneful line.

He is severe, as was only to be expected, on the men who rant :—

More nature oft and finer strokes are shown
In the low whisper than tempestuous tone ;
And Hamlet's hollow voice and first amaze
More powerful tenor to the mind conveys,
Than he who, swell'n with big impetuous rage,
Bullies the bulky phantom off the stage.

In the same way :—

The modes of grief are not included all
In the white handkerchief and mournful drawl ;
A single look more marks the “internal woe,”
Than all the windings of the lengthen'd Oh.

After this the poet, instead of dwelling on the Eye—the third of “the

powers" which, he tells us, are absolutely necessary to the player—contents himself chiefly with enumerating some of the evils of the acting of his time which seem to him particularly reprehensible. One of them is a fault which, it is to be feared, will characterize all bad actors in all times and countries:—

A want of due attention on the stage.

Lloyd tells us he has seen actors,

And admir'd ones, too,
Whose tongues wound up set forward from their cue ;
In their own speech who whine or roar away,
Yet seem unmov'd at what the rest may say ;
Whose eyes and thoughts on different objects roam,
Until the prompter's voice recalls them home.

He also reproves those who transfer their attention from the action on the stage to the spectators in the auditorium, and gives another sly cut at the "traditional" as manifested in invariabilities of costume. But what, he says, offends him most in stage customs is "the slip-door and slowly-rising ghost." He disapproved, evidently, of the substantial phantom which generally does duty for the murder'd Banquo:—

When chilling horrors shake th' affrighted king,
And guilt torments him with her scorpion sting,
When keenest feelings at his bosom pull,
And fancy tells him that the seat is full,
Why need the ghost usurp the monarch's place
To frighten children with his mealy face ?
The king alone should form the phantom there,
And talk and tremble at the vacant chair.

Clearly Lloyd must have belonged to the number of the purely intellectual critics, and would have applauded Mr. Irving in the conviction which has led that independent-thinking artist to discard the "counterfeit presentations" in *Hamlet*. The poem concludes with the declaration that the true object of acting is

To purge the passions and reform the mind,
To give to nature all the force of art,
And while it charms the ear to mend the "heart."

The "decent stage," we are told, is "virtue's natural friend." We are not to judge of the theatre by its worst manifestations:—

Tho' oft debas'd with scenes profane and loose,
No reason weighs against its proper use.

Finally, we have this effective contrast between the contemporary honour and applause accorded to the actor and the necessarily fleeting character of his reputation:—

O hapless artist ! though thy skill can raise
The bursting peal of universal praise,
Tho' at thy beck Applause delighted stands,
And lifts, Briareus-like, her hundred hands.
Know, Fame awards thee but a partial breath !
Not all thy talents brave the stroke of death.
Poets to ages yet unborn appeal,
And latest tunes th' eternal Nature feel.
Tho' blended here the praise of bard and play'r,
While more than half becomes the actor's share,

[Sept. 1, 1879.]

Relentless death untwists the mingled fame,
 And sinks the player in the poet's name.
 The pliant muscles of the various face,
 The mien that gave each sentence strength and grace,
 The tuneful voice, the eye that spoke the mind,
 Are gone, nor leave a single trace behind.

Such is the general argument of Lloyd's poem on acting; and if that poem is not very largely informed by wit and very greatly distinguished by epigrammatic expression, it must be conceded that it is eminently thoughtful, and distinguished, at least, by a forcible and intelligible style. Its chief interest, undoubtedly, lies in the sentiments it discloses. These go to show that the stage of the eighteenth century was very like that of the nineteenth, and that there is a strong resemblance, especially, between the mediocre artists of all periods. It is to the mediocre artists of the present period that the perusal of *The Actor* may be recommended. For the cultivated and experienced actor it has no lessons whatever, unless it serve to confirm him in the path he has already chalked out for himself. But to the mere journeymen of the profession, to the men especially who lean wholly on tradition, it can teach a good many useful, if not very original, things. That to be a thoroughly good actor a man must not only be well taught by the experience of others, but enter personally into and master his particular parts; that stride and attitude do not make "tragedy;" that rôles should not be exaggerated or over-acted; that mimicry is the lowest form of art, if art at all; that neither rant, nor monotony, nor over-emphasis is good elocution; that whilst on the stage the assumption of a rôle should never be relaxed or dropped, and so on; these are the elementary principles on which Lloyd goes, and they suffice to indicate that, if the stage has always had bad actors, it has always had good critics who knew how to place their fingers on the faults of the bad actors, and who must in their time have had a certain amount of influence for good. The disheartening thing about such works as Lloyd's is that it proves likewise how evanescent is the influence of the critic, and how invariably a certain class of actors reproduces the foibles and follies of its predecessors. Perhaps if *The Actor* were more widely read in the profession than it is, it might act as a permanent and effective warning against the failings it so sensibly points out.

SIR EDWARD MORTIMER.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

THE announcement that in the course of a few weeks *The Iron Chest* will be revived at the Lyceum Theatre may serve to recall attention to what Hazlitt has termed the finest character in the whole range of English fiction. None of the political visionaries of the end of the eighteenth century had a more touching faith in the principles of the great French Revolution than William Godwin. He believed in human innocence, in social

perfectibility, and in the omnipotence of mind over matter. He dreamt by night and by day of an intellectual republic, of an age of universal philanthropy and benevolence. All men, he averred, were born with dispositions to virtue, and the vice and misery which defaced the earth were due exclusively to aristocratic power, religion, and "civilization" generally. Government in any form was indefensible, as no man had the shadow of a right to interfere with the proceedings of another. The most callous criminal could be reclaimed by an appeal to reason, by punishment never. Protection from injury or insult might be secured by a reference to ethical maxims. Marriage was opposed to the best instincts of our nature, property the source of innumerable evils. In his *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, which by the irony of fate appeared during the Reign of Terror, Godwin propounded these pleasant theories with remarkable vigour and earnestness, with no apparent misgiving as to their consequences, and with as much calmness as he would have urged the necessity of the most trifling alteration of the law. His next work, the novel of *Caleb Williams*, was also written to enforce his doctrines, but more especially to illustrate the evils of aristocratic power—the "modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man." Before long he saw that in throwing his broadside into the form of a story he had made a sad mistake. The narrative aroused so much interest for its own sake that the object with which he gave it to the world was all but forgotten. The author of the logical *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, indeed, possessed creative power of a high order, and in *Caleb Williams* this power is displayed to the best advantage. No novel of equal value, perhaps, has ever rested on a simpler groundwork. But two men may be said to appear before us—the high-bred and generous Falkland, borne down by a dark secret, and his servant Caleb, morbidly curious as to what that secret is. There is no love episode, no gleam of wit or humour to relieve the sombreness of the picture. Eventually Caleb discovers all; and his master, aided by oppressive laws, hunts him to the verge of infamy and an ignominious death. Nevertheless, Falkland is not a person to be regarded with unqualified abhorrence. He is really of a noble and tender nature, and has been urged to the commission of crime simply by a mistaken and deluded sense of honour. The dramatic effectiveness of the character was not overlooked by John Kemble, and at his request George Colman the Younger adapted then ovel to the stage under the title of *The Iron Chest*.

The play was brought out at Drury Lane in the spring of 1796, but was withdrawn after four representations. The causes of this ill-success are not far to seek. In its original form *The Iron Chest* presented as curious a medley of tragedy and comedy and opera as could well be conceived. The dramatist, in fact, introduced a good deal of irrelevant and tiresome comic matter, and some music of a more than doubtful quality was set to the piece by Storace. The rehearsals had been few and incomplete; "the ragged master of a theatrical barn," we are assured, "might have blushed for such a want of discipline." Above all, John Kemble was not only unsuited to the character of Sir Edward Mortimer, the Falkland of the novel, but too ill to do himself even the semblance of justice. The first

performance has been described at some length by Colman. "Kemble," he writes, "I found in his dressing-room, seemingly unwell, and swallowing opium-pills. The play began, and all went smoothly on till a trifling disapprobation was shown to the character personated by Dodd, Adam Winterton. I considered this, however, to be of no great moment, for Kemble was to appear immediately afterwards. Well, the great actor was discovered as Sir Edward Mortimer in his library. Gloom and desolation sat upon his brow, and he was habited from the wig to the shoe-string with the most studied exactness. Had one of King Charles the First's portraits stepped from its frame it could not have afforded a truer representation of ancient and melancholy dignity. The picture could not have looked better, but in justice to the picture it must be added that the picture could scarcely have acted worse. I requested him at the end of the first act to order an apology to be made for his indisposition, but he would not suffer an apology to be made. 'It should have been made, if at all, before the play began.' 'Then why was it not made *then*?' 'He did not imagine that illness would have disabled him.' 'Did he not know that he was too feeble to make a violent exertion?' At length, by my perseverance, and the interference of a proprietor of the theatre, an apology was made. In the progress of the play, when the disapprobation of the audience was expressed on the reappearance of Dodd, Kemble came forward. He expressed his fears that he was the cause of their disapprobation, entreated their patience, and hoped he should shortly gain strength to enable them to judge on a future night of the merits of the play." The disappointed dramatist now becomes positively rancorous. "I owe Kemble—for his illness, compassion; for his conduct under it, censure; for his refusing to make an apology, a smile; for his making an apology, a sneer; for his mismanagement, a groan; for his acting, a hiss." This account is something like the tavern-bill picked from Falstaff's pocket—there is but one halfpennyworth of compassion to this intolerable deal of blame. Elsewhere he says:—"Frogs in a marsh, flies in a bottle, wind in a crevice, a preacher in a field, the drone of a bagpipe, all—all yielded to the inimitable and soporific monotony of Mr. Kemble!" This preface was soon afterwards suppressed, and as much as five guineas has of late years been paid for a copy of the original edition.

The dramatist probably saw that he as well as the actor was at fault. The piece was favourably received at the Haymarket and elsewhere, partly because the pruning-knife had in the meantime been applied to it, and partly on account of the grace and earnestness with which Elliston played Sir Edward Mortimer. But it was not until Edmund Kean added the character to his repertory that the piece can be said to have obtained a firm hold of the stage. If theatrical tradition may be trusted, his Sir Edward was scarcely if at all inferior in power and beauty to his Sir Giles, in which, as in Othello and Richard and Shylock, he stood alone. "In the picturesque expression of outward passions by external action," writes Hazlitt, "Mr. Kean is unrivalled. The transitions in this play from calmness to deep despair, from concealed suspicion to open rage, from smooth, decorous indifference to the convulsive agonies of remorse, gave him frequent opportunities for the display of his peculiar talents. The mixture of commonplace fami-

liarity and solemn injunction in his speeches to Wilford," the Caleb of the novel, "was what no other actor could give with the same felicity and force. The last scene of all—his coming to life again after his swooning at the fatal discovery of his guilt, and then falling back, after a ghastly struggle, like a man waked from the tomb, into despair and death in the arms of his mistress—was one of those consummations of art which those who have not seen and not felt them in this actor may be assured that they have never seen or felt anything in their lives, and never will to the end of them." "He looked," says Barry Cornwall, "as no one ever looked before or since. The tones of his voice, trembling with remorse, penetrated your heart; and in the trial scene, where he sat silent and death pale, his fingers grasping the arm-chair in which he sate till you thought that the strong oak must crumble into powder—who has ever done the like?" No one; but it should be added that Osbaldiston and Macready, while unable to weaken the impression he had created, impersonated Sir Edward with considerable effect. In regard to the forthcoming revival, Mr. Irving may be expected to add another flower to his chaplet by his acting in the character, and the story will for the first time on the stage be treated as one of about a hundred years ago instead of, as hitherto, an illustration of English life in the days of Charles I.

THE FRACAS AT THE OPÉRA COMIQUE.

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

MANY people who have read the police-court proceedings of the recent riot at the Opéra Comique, have laughed at the matter as being a good joke. Many people have believed in Mr. Besley's clever observations that the case was a good advertisement, but very few persons, indeed, are really aware of the facts, and to what fearful danger the many hundreds of people who formed the audience at the above theatre on the eve of July 31st were most certainly put.

The Comedy Opéra Company, Limited (very limited), consists of Mr. E. Hodgson Bayley, of water-cart—we mean "patent hydrostatic van"—fame; Mr. Collard Drake, who makes and plays flutes; George Metzler & Co. (Mr. Frank Chappell being the Co.), and a Mr. Wilson. These five are the directors. The shareholders, if recent report speaks correctly, are Mr. Allen, a musical composer, and two gentlemen, who are "at present abroad."

This company opened the Opéra Comique in November, 1877, with *The Sorcerer*. All went along successfully until the following January, when the houses became rather empty, and up went a fortnight's notice. The houses got better; down went the fortnight's notice. A few more stalls vacant, and up went the fortnight's notice again. It was a very trying and anxious time with many of the artistes, and especially with the *employées*, who were not deriving special incomes from music, patent hydrostatic vans,

and flutes. *H.M.S. Pinafore* was produced the latter end of the following May (1878), and was a great success. At the latter end of July the weather became insufferably hot, and London empty. The business fell off suddenly. One Saturday evening, a tolerably cool night, the receipts were about £140, while the following Monday, when it was dreadfully hot, they were the forty, minus the hundred. The Comedy Opéra Company became alarmed ; and, as usual, up went the fortnight's notice again. Matters were becoming ludicrous. One Friday night the artistes were really unaware whether the next night was to be the last. Eventually the directors agreed to accept the proposal of the artistes, including the choristers, who only earn their 30s. a week, to make a reduction of a third from their salaries. This was accepted, and, singularly enough, the business immediately improved, and Mr. E. H. Bayley, of hydrostatic van fame, never said a truer word than that this was the best move the Opéra Comedy Company, Limited, had hitherto made, because, be it remembered, that they did not suggest the present style of performances, viz., English opera, English authors, composers, and actors ; that was the idea "a many years ago" of Mr. Carte. At last the directors began to coin money, the *Pinafore* being a grand success. The Comedy Opéra Company, Limited, made another good move. Mr. Carte was bound under the provisions of his lease to close for repairs at some time or other. Taking into consideration the fact that during the previous Christmas the theatre did very bad business, the directors thought they could not do better than close the theatre for the necessary repairs at the corresponding time. This was done, and at Christmas, 1878, actors, chorus, and *employées*, were, with one or two exceptions, without an engagement at the very time when it may be presumed a little extra revenue, if anything, would have been more in accordance with the wish of the majority of them. The theatre re-opened in February, 1879, and greater success than ever attended the *Pinafore*. It is asserted that the directors have made about £16,000.

A quarrel then ensued between them and the author and composer. Mr. Carte, who held the lease, had got tired of the humorous doings of the directors, and so dispensed with their services. Into the question of copyright, &c., which is *sub judice*, we will not enter. The Comedy Opera Company may be right for aught we know. The last day of the innings of the Comedy Opera Company, Limited, was on July 31st last. One would have imagined that on that night the directors would have come to the theatre to bid the actors "good-bye," and to thank them for having in some small measure contributed to the success of the piece. Not at all. In return for their having kindly reduced their salaries, and as an emolument for their having been thrown out of an engagement at Christmas, Mr. E. H. Bayley came to the theatre with some of his patent hydrostatic van manufacturers and drivers ; Mr. Collard Drake, Mr. Frank Chappell, and his brother Mr. Cecil Chappell, a highly intelligent solicitor, forming a species of escort. Their object was to take away the scenery, which, it appears, according to the wording of the lease, may not be removed, but which they believed was theirs. They came early, with what result has been partially made known. The actors on the stage were startled in the middle of their performance by

cries of "Come on!" "Now's the time!" They heard a rush of many persons down the stone steps which led direct to the stage, and immediately afterwards saw a number of roughs at the prompt entrance. Many had heard "a lot of Mr. Bayley's water-cart men were coming down to have a row," but until the moment no importance was attached to the rumour. The ladies on the stage became panic-stricken, and too much praise cannot be given to Miss Everard for her presence of mind and the struggles she made to proceed with her part in the ordinary way. The ladies and gentlemen began to rise hurriedly and leave the stalls. Mr. Alfred Cellier, who was conducting in the orchestra, turned round to the occupants of the stalls and assured them that there was no cause for alarm, and begged of them to remain seated. One of the crew of *H.M.S. Pinafore* addressed the frightened occupants of a stage-box to the same effect, but to no purpose. The uproar behind the scenes increased, and snuffling and loud cries were heard. The audience began to rise in all parts of the crowded house, and leave in haste. Mr. Cellier then stopped the band and chorus, and Mr. Grossmith stepped forward and informed the terrified audience that the late directors laid claim to the scenery, that, although there was a great dispute proceeding, there was no danger whatever. After some cheering the audience became more reassured, but the riot behind continued for some time. It is only fair to Mr. Metzler and to Mr. Wilson to say that they were not present once during the evening of this disgraceful scene. The compromise of the police summonses has cost the directors several hundreds of pounds, a small matter to them. If the case had gone to trial, Mr. Barker might have had the poor satisfaction of seeing Messrs. Bayley, Drake, and Chappell fined, and some of them even imprisoned, but it would have cost him several hundreds of pounds instead, a matter of some little importance to him, perhaps. We hope that the defendants, for their own sakes, will not look back upon the evening of the 31st July, 1879, without a deep sense of shame and regret, if only for their want of consideration for the professional ladies and gentlemen who had worked so well on their behalf, and who had nothing to do with this unfortunate dispute, to say nothing of a catastrophe which very nearly occurred.

MACREADY'S WERNER.

BY E. J. GOODMAN.

EVERYBODY knows that Lord Byron always disclaimed any desire to see his plays acted, and indeed declared that they were never intended for theatrical representation. Whether he was sincere in this, as in many other feelings which he professed, may be doubted. At any rate more than one of his dramas was certainly constructed as though the noble author had had an eye to the footlights all the time; and as events have proved, two, if not three of his tragedies—*Manfred*, *Sardanapalus*, and *Werner*—were capable of being played with marked success. Perhaps the most suitable of all Byron's dramas for stage representation, apart from the especial

opportunities which *Sardanapalus* presents as a spectacle, is the really fine tragedy of *Werner*, which, originally produced by Macready, has been revived fitfully from time to time, and doubtless will, sooner or later, be seen again on the public stage. Like Shakspere's plays, *Werner* wants a good deal of "cutting" to render it suitable for performance within a reasonable time, and to this treatment it was duly subjected when taken in hand by Macready. How the play was dealt with by the great tragedian and manager when he adapted it for the stage I have means of showing, having recently got into my possession a copy of Macready's prompt book of *Werner*, with all his deletions and additions in MS., together with his stage directions and suggestions for scenic effect, business, and so forth.

The stage directions are throughout very precise, and it may be interesting to quote some of them. Thus, the first scene of the first act as arranged by the author is, "The hall of a decayed palace, near a small town on the north frontier of Silesia—the night tempestuous." This brief description Macready thus elaborates: "Storm of wind and rain before the curtain rises; lights half down; sliding panel partially hidden by torn tapestry in R flat; folding doors L flat; door with three steps leading up to it in 3 E R; door in 2 E L; table and two chairs C; loaf, lamp, and knife on table; Werner pacing to-and-fro; Josephine seated L of table. Storm, wind, and rain at—'but not to thyself.'" To this is added the special memorandum: "N.B. All the apartments in the palace, but particularly this scene, should convey the idea of long desertion and extreme wretchedness, the rotting tapestry hanging in tatters from the walls, the cornices and ornaments crumbling with damp and decay." Equally precise are the directions for the brief but important scene in which Gabor is found hidden in the secret passage at the residence of Werner. "This scene," it is set forth, "is formed by arches running from the first grooves to the very extremity of the stage. Behind the first arch in the very next groove should be a dark-coloured flat, which, with the first arch is run on first. The other arches and back-door piece are run on behind, and the previous scene drawn off *instantly*; then the dark flat removed discovering Gabor. There should also be an arched border lowered before the first wings. The whole movement should be so rapid that the front flats should only clap to and open immediately. It should only be one movement. The stage should be literally quite dark." There are several more directions for this scene in which but one actor appears and only twenty-five lines are spoken, thus showing the care Macready bestowed on such stage details. Again, the manager is very particular to have a suitable effect produced at the opening of the fifth act. "This scene," he says, "should convey the most splendid idea of feudal magnificence. The time should be marked as about sunset." "Discharges of cannons and flourishes of music heard as the scene opens, and at intervals afterwards very distant." The prompt book contains many more directions of the same precise character, every change of position and piece of "business" being duly described and assigned its exact relationship with the text.

With the play itself, Macready has dealt with a freedom which, however necessary for stage effect, would probably have shocked the noble

author had he lived to see his lines cut about and supplemented by the ruthless manager. The condensations and omissions are fair enough and are effected with no little skill, superfluous matter being deleted and fragments of long speeches and dialogues being pieced together with no little ingenuity, and yet without adding a word to the original. In more than one instance, however, we find the text of Byron eked out with scraps of Macready in which managerial necessities certainly are shown superior to literary considerations. Thus, the second scene of Act II., between Stralenheim and Fritz ends with the words, uttered by the latter :

Good night !
I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.

But Macready makes Stralenheim give the cue "good night," and substitutes in Fritz's response the word "spirits" for "temper," and then causes the Count to close the scene in the following interpolated lines :—

Stra. I trust so too (*to himself*) for I have need of them.
To-morrow *will* restore me, for with its dawn
The escort comes, and with it confidence and power.
This interval of fate is all that's left to Siegendorf !
The key that locks his dungeon-grate on him, opens for me
The portals of a palace. Poor wretch. Lead on !—(*Exeunt R. H. D. 2 E.*)

Again, in Mr. Macready's opinion, Act IV. does not open quite as it ought to do ; so when Eric and Henrick with other retainers of the Count are discovered in a Gothic hall of Siegendorf's castle, we are treated to the following bit of new and choice dialogue :

Henrick. Silence, ye knaves, and mark at noon exactly :
Let all be ready to the moment : mind
The new liveries : and every one, e'en to the trussing
Of a point, most carefully apparell'd.
If one of ye unseemly varlets wear
His plume awry, his ruff ill-tied,
Or doublet loosely braced, he shall remember
This high festival without the calendar's aid.

Attendants. We'll mind.—(*Exeunt different ways all except Henrick and Eric.*)

Henrick. Nor prince nor noble at this great solemnity
Shall cast into eclipse the train of Siegendorf.

And then Byron is once more allowed to be himself again. But the poet, unfortunately, has not concluded his tragedy to the manager's satisfaction. A much-less famous manager once expressed his objection to the startling and unconventional manner in which *The Bells* ends with the sudden death of Mathias. "I think he ought," said the manager, "to come forward first and say, 'This is the effect of crime,' or something of that sort, and *then* die." In a similar spirit Macready has re-arranged the termination of *Werner*. The following are the closing lines of the tragedy as written by Byron :—

Siegendorf. Ida, beware ! There's blood upon that hand.
Ida. (*Stooping to kiss it*). I'd kiss it off though it were mine.
Sieg. It is so !
Ulric. Away ! It is your father's.—(*Exit*).
Ida. Oh, great God
And I have loved this man.
(*Ida falls senseless. Josephine stands speechless with horror.*)

Sieg.

The wretch hath slain
Them both ! My Josephine, we are now alone !
Would we had ever been so ! All is over
For me ! Now open wide, my sire, thy grave ;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine ! The race of Siegendorf is past !

A noble and effective ending enough one would think. But it would not do for Mr. Macready, who finishes the play thus :

Ulric (tearing his hand away from her, Ida). Away ! It is your father's !
(*Ida falls fainting into the arms of Herman and Otto. Josephine is horror-struck.*)

Ulric is rushing up towards R. H. U. Entrance when six officers enter rapidly
R. H. U. E. and secure him as Gabor returns, exclaiming :

Gabor. Officers of justice. There's the assassin. Seize him !

(*Henric and Eric support the Count.*)

Sieg. The race of Siegendorf is past !

My Josephine, 'tis death that sinks me down.

Joseph. Oh, no, no, my husband !

Sieg. 'Tis death,

And from the son I loved, loved before all ;
Oh, pray for him, our son, pray for him. Oh !
Could my dying voice—help me to kneel—forgive—
Oh, Ulric, Ulric !—(*Dies.*)

(*Josephine remains gazing in speechless horror on the body.*)

It may be matter for controversy whether these alterations are improvements ; but there can be little doubt that if the manager found it necessary to rewrite any of the text of his author he would have done well to employ a more skilled pen than that which he was able to wield himself. Let us hope that whenever *Werner* may be revived again, a task which Mr. Irving might very profitably take in hand, the same pains will be bestowed on its production that Macready seems to have used, with rather more delicate treatment in the touching-up of the text.

THE OLD PLAYGOER AND THE NEW.

By MACSYCOPHANT.

FOR years past the wits have been wagging their tongues and flourishing their pens in ridicule of the Old Playgoer. In season and out of season he has stimulated the jocularity of the journalist. He has been severely taken to task by the magazines, and at one time he was as essential to the comic papers as Mr. Martin Tupper himself. Taking their cue from the chartered wits, those who have no pretensions to *esprit* rail at the inoffensive creature, credit him with an obtrusiveness which is all their own, mock the manner of his respectful "Sir," affect to disbelieve his memories of the "Elder Kean," and with objurgations consign him to the limbo reserved for *laudator temporis acti*. Meanwhile the interesting old gentleman is silent concerning the foibles of his critics. Their slang is as unintelligible to him as the cuneiform inscriptions ; and the dramatic atmosphere in which they elect to breathe, he finds close, warm, unwholesome, and reeking with the fumes of *patchouli*.

Although I confess to a mild interest in the drama of the moment, I have never been able to see the justice of these slurs or to copy the sneers of my less Catholic contemporaries. It is not merely that I tolerate the Old Playgoer, I reverence his vivid memories, and respect his funny old-world stories. He is a thousand times better than a dramatic biography, because he is devoid of overweening conceit and turgid irrelevancy. He is your true historian, inspired by love, and with a most felicitous turn for the introduction of local colour. He is a poet, and sings the praises of those who have given delight to the summer of his years. There is a gentleness in his demeanour which is worthy of all imitation, but inimitable, and he reverences all that is great and good. He unconsciously discharges unacknowledged functions as a transmitter of manners, being indeed

A link among the days to knit
The generations each to each.

Instead of flouting the venerable being and pointing at him the ill-timed jape, it were well the rather to raise our hats, unwilling to wound a spirit finding consolation in memory and the vision of faces faded out of life.

I admit at once that there is some shadow of foundation for the most grievous charge preferred against him. There can be no doubt that he has seen the elder Kean, and that moreover he has frequently mentioned the fact, prefacing the intimation with the offensively ceremonious "Sir." There are high crimes and misdemeanours which I cannot palliate. I sadly admit the truth of the allegations. Nevertheless, bear with him. Indeed, indeed, he means no insult. He would not upbraid you because you have not seen the elder Kean. He would but invite you to participate in his memories, memories dulled by time and blurred perchance by tears. He is a very host, who having rare viands in his larder and old wines selected by himself in his cellar, bids you to his table and gives you of his best. If he volunteers the invitation 'tis perhaps the more lucky for you; had he known that when you rose from his mahogany you would straightway imitate his little foibles and pass smart criticisms on his feast, the invitation might not have been accorded. As to the objectionable prefix "Sir," I can only excuse it on the theory that it is a trick of politeness characteristic of a bygone time, and for my own part I would no more allow the Old Playgoer to abandon it than I would permit him to alter the pattern of his neckcloth, the cut of his coat, or his habit of deference to ladies and gentleness to children.

Very few people will, I opine, pay much attention to the statements of an individual who calmly and with unabashed front declares that he finds the prattle of the Old Playgoer much more exhilarating than the chatter of the New. I own to this erratic taste; indeed, I question if the New man has any right to the title *playgoer*. He does not go. He lounges thither, and when he arrives at the door he has not quite made up his mind whether or no he shall enter. Somnolent after a late dinner, he reclines in his stall and surveys the scene with lack-lustre eye. He is as much interested in the represented work as his crutch-stick, and when thereafter asked his opinion of the proceedings, curtly ejaculates "Dammit" or mutters something apparently irrelevant concerning the shapeliness of Miss Somebody-or-

other's limbs. This is in the stalls. The infection, however, has spread from these superior spaces to the pit itself, where the Old Playgoer is most frequently to be found. The New Playgoer of the pit, if you will but believe him, is personally acquainted with the chief performers on the stage, and can relate anecdotes of them—chiefly scandalous—for the delectation of those about him. He has all the vices inherent of the Gilded Forehead with the crutch-stick, adding an extra vice in the shape of gratuitous mendacity. His criticism is of the *ad captandum* sort, and he has caught an oracular method from the orator-in-chief of a suburban debating club, upon whom he has modelled his style. When he is pleased the histrion affording him delight is described as “stunning.” When his honour is dissatisfied the unfortunate player failing to meet his dramatic appetite is called a “duffer.” A clever work is “slap up;” an inferior production is “bosh;” and an utterly unacceptable drama is finally damned as “rot.”

In no such spirit did the Old Playgoer take his pleasure or deliver his opinions. With him going to the play was a serious matter, and an observance occurring with as great regularity as the Sabbath itself. He dined early, so that if unhappily the digestive organs were at less than their normal degree of reliability he might repose before sallying forth. He knew to within half a-dozen or so how many persons would be congregated at the pit doors, of what theatres, at what hours. He regulated his conduct and his chronometer in accordance with this foreknowledge, and was therefore enabled to secure a comfortable position before the theatre was properly lighted. His was a simple nature, and found pleasure in observing phenomena which to you moderns are only subjects for so much chaff. The lighting of the playhouse was on each succeeding visit a fresh joy. When from their inferno the gentlemen of the band appeared bravely in sight he was conscious of keen sensations of pleasure, and a thousand sights in the audience were pictures only less interesting than those presently to be unfolded upon the stage. The authors of the “Rejected Addresses” must have been Old Playgoers of the true stamp. They could not otherwise have painted with such playful particularity the theatre-interior in their diverting imitation of the Rev. George Crabbe. Needless to say that Charles Lamb was an Old Playgoer, the very prototype of the race, the father of the amiable family of Old Playgoers. One shudders to think that even he, casually encountered by the off-hand critic of the debating club, might have been subjected to his blatant scurrility ; Elia's sensitive nature stung to the quick by his irreverent banter.

When the Old Playgoer passed his opinion on the entertainment offered to him and spoke of the efforts of the performers there was no flippancy in his tone, and he was happily devoid of slang. In his time men gave to the world their opinions about plays and actors in shilling pamphlets, and a leading tragedian was as great a public character as the Prime Minister himself. A certain tone and solemnity, therefore, were natural in discussing matters dramatic, and the manner which the Old Playgoer acquired in his salad days is still pleasantly perceptible in his utterances.

It is not that I wish unnecessarily to produce this relic of the days that have been, or to depreciate the merits of the present race of playgoers. I

would merely protect him from the shafts of those who sit in the seat of the scorner, and protest that there are people who give credence to his reminiscences, and are not bored by his innocent garrulity. I may, I hope, enjoy my chat with the veteran of Waterloo without rendering myself liable to a charge of maligning the hero of to-day.

Excellent Old Playgoer! thy very faults have endeared thee to me. Thou art not merely a voice from the past. Thou art a part of the past. I cherish thee as I do my Pepys. I would not have a white hair of thee harmed, or thy anecdotal repertoire lessened by a single reminiscence of the elder Kean. As I listen to thy artless gossip I am become the depositary of unpublished history. Thou art more substance than Bunn's two volumes. I credit thee more than I do the Greville Memoirs. Thou art as enjoyable as the autobiographical portion of the life of Charles James Mathews, about whom and about whose father thou hast treasured personal items not to be trotted out for the edification of casually-encountered wights, but to be carefully introduced when the mahogany is cleared, and the old port—your Old Playgoer has a proper appreciation of old port—is placed upon the table. I have watched thy dismay, perchance I have participated in it, when, in that medley which men call burlesque, a crowd of shapely and half-draped damsels, who could neither act, nor sing, nor dance, have stood upon the stage giggling at the stalls and conversing confidentially with each other. Sympathetically have I regarded thy puzzled look, it may be that I also have felt puzzled, as the actors bandied those word-contortions which in these days pass for puns, and emitted those hopelessly cockney rhymes which in thy earlier time would not have been tolerated in ballads howled from the gutter. But I forget. Apostrophe is nowadays as little likely to be tolerated as the Old Playgoer himself. And if I proceed much further with my apology, I am likely to be put down as being a degree less tolerable than one who has witnessed the elder Kean in his best days, Sir.]

Portraits.

XXVIII.—MISS HENRI.

MANY of us have heard of Ross in Herefordshire, if only by reason of the fact that the John Kyrtel immortalized by Pope lived and died within its walls. Near this old town, and within an hour's drive of the birthplace of Garrick, Miss Blanche Henri passed most of her early life, her parents having been established there for many years. However strong its claims to our respect may be, especially in regard to its historical associations and the quality of its cider, the county of Hereford, it is to be feared, is far behind less prosperous haunts of men in the way of civilization. The drama has not found a very congenial atmosphere in it, and Miss Henri had arrived at the mature age of fifteen before she was taken to, or perhaps ever heard of, a theatre. Her first visit to the play may be said to have sealed her fate. From that night her first wish was to become an actress by profession. Her friends were struck with dismay on finding that she entertained such an idea. Like most people living in the heart of the country, they held theatres in deep abhorrence, and the local clergy were anxious to strengthen rather than dispel the prejudice. But, as the event proved, Miss Henri was not to be diverted from the resolution she had formed. Not long afterwards, the death of her father having reduced her to the necessity of depending upon herself, she was sent to a brother in London in the hope that she would become a governess—an eminently respectable occupation, no doubt, but one which persons who know the world are scarcely anxious that their daughters should follow. The visits she paid to theatres in the metropolis served to increase her passion for the stage ; and at length, though not without many misgivings, her mother acquiesced in her choice of a profession. One obstacle had scarcely been surmounted when another appeared. Being unknown to anybody connected with the stage, Miss Henri, though liberally educated, of good presence, and willing to take the humblest part that might be allotted to her, experienced considerable difficulty in getting before the footlights. Eventually, in 1870, a few months after her arrival in London, she obtained a footing at the Charing Cross Theatre, then under the management of vivacious Miss Fowler. Her foot once on the ladder, she mounted swiftly and securely. One evening Mr. Buckstone happened to look in at the theatre, and, alive to the refinement and spirit which characterized her acting almost from the first, engaged her to take part at the Haymarket in the comedietta of *Mischief-Making*. Before she had been at his theatre a fortnight a valuable opportunity fell to her lot. The chief piece in the programme was Mr. Byron's comedy *An English Gentleman*. Miss Fanny Gwyn, who had a long and trying part in it, was one morning taken so ill that all hopes of her being able to play that day had to be abandoned. Miss Henri chanced to be at rehearsal when the news arrived. The manager was at his wit's end, but seemed to recover his equanimity on catching sight of her. Would she take Miss Gwyn's place ? The young actress eagerly replied in the



THE THEATRE NO. 14, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURY TYPE.

Yours very truly
Blanche Henry

affirmative, devoted the whole of the afternoon to a painfully intense study of the part, and in the evening, without taking any rest, played it in such a way that the manager raised her salary on the spot. Miss Henri remained at the Haymarket about four years, during which time she made good progress in art and in public favour. On leaving it she joined the company headed by Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Compton, and Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, and during a tour with it in the provinces played secondary characters in comedies of the eighteenth century with a success which might well have occasioned a little uneasiness to Miss Litton. The importance of this engagement to Miss Henri can hardly be overrated, seeing that it gave her opportunities of associating with great artists and appearing before audiences of widely different temperaments. During her absence from London the Haymarket fell into the hands of Mr. Sothern and Mr. Clarke, who on the production of *Anne Boleyn* engaged her to support Miss Neilson therein. Now, as before, she was prepared to play anything, from romantic drama down to the trifling of *lever du rideau*. In a piece belonging to the latter category, *A Cup of Tea*, she appeared to so much advantage that the dramatic critic of *Public Opinion*—usually very stern and hard to please—wrote quite warmly in her praise. “Miss Henri,” he said, “is no mere *farceuse*, and the quiet ease and grace of her acting gave much finish to the trivial piece. She read a few lines of poetry in her part and spoke the ‘tag’ with remarkably correct emphasis and intonation. In the *Widow Hunt*, which followed, she also,” continues this dreaded critic, “exhibited signs of education, refinement, and ability, marking her out for future distinction as a *comédienne* of the right class.” Her success was substantially recognised in the autumn of 1877 by an offer from Mr. Hare of an engagement at the Court Theatre, where she appeared with Miss Ellen Terry, Mr. Kelly, and Miss Amy Roselle in *The House of Darnley*. Mr. Broughton said that although she came in only twice she made as much impression by her sweet and dignified manner as many would have produced if acting the whole evening. In the revival of *Victims* she played Mrs. Fitzherbert, a part which required her to display the same qualities, but was far more worthy of her talents. “The generous and devoted wife of Fitzherbert,” wrote the critic of the *Daily News*, “is represented with such excellent moderation and feeling by Miss Henri that the rather heartless trick to which she is subjected for the mere sake of bringing about the repentance of Mrs. Merryweather necessarily awakens more sympathy than the author seems to have intended.” Her eager attentions to Fitzherbert, her delight at the word of encouragement and the caress which he deigns to bestow upon her, could not have been surpassed. Success entails additional responsibility, as Miss Henri must have felt when, about two months afterwards, she was suddenly called upon to take the place of Miss Ellen Terry as Lilian Vavasour in *New Men and Old Acres*. Her performance, if not equal to that of the older actress, had at any rate a distinct charm of its own, and won for her an engagement at the Prince of Wales’s Theatre. No impartial observer, we may be sure, thought her elevation ill-deserved. Miss Henri is one of the most refined and thoughtful actresses we possess, and, if the requisite opportunities are afforded her, will probably become the Broisat of the English stage.

Feuilleton.

A PERFECT GENTLEMAN.

By GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

LYDDY, here's a letter from Lord Elchamp. He says if we don't accept his invitation this time he will think we are proud and want to cut him!"

"But we can't go," said Mrs. Elston, quietly; "every week is filled up."

"No," said Elston, playing with a little heap of letters that had been delivered by the morning's post; "Brunton Theatre was burned down yesterday morning, so we have the week after next clear."

"Burned down! Ah, how sad. Poor Leslie has nothing but ill-luck."

"Out of evil comes good," I ventured to say. "The mishap will stir people up in his favour. They'll build him a new house, and subscribe liberally. Case of modern phoenix—fortune out of the ashes, and so on."

"Very likely," said Elston. "The English people really are generous at heart. What do you say, Lyddy, shall we go?"

"Nothing I should like better," said Mrs. Elston. "I want a rest and a change."

"Good; then I'll accept for the week."

"And he'll count us to stay a month," said Mrs. Elston, laughing.

"Very nice," I said, rather cynically. "Noble patronage—the players going to Elsmore to be well-received by my Lord Hamlet."

"Don't be a fool, Scribe," said Elston, sharply. "Elchanip is one of my best friends. He is a thorough gentleman, a true man. Hang his title. I believe he always keeps it locked up in the iron chest with the family archives. By Jove, Lyddy, I'm glad we are going, though. Pray for fine weather. We'll have that old boat out on the lake and fish all day."

"Fish?" I said. "You, the most business-like and enterprising of our actor-managers, going to fish?"

"Yes, and why not? He has a glorious old lake, surrounded by trees and full of great water-lilies; a lovely spot where we shall sit all day long with Lady Macbeth there, dreaming over a novel, while we pull out, or don't pull out, the great carp and tench. There's the jolliest old summer-house built out on piles, where lunch will be spread, and"—then he cried, kissing his hand *à la Française*, "it's a regular little paradise amidst the Derbyshire hills."

"New acquaintance?" I said. "One struck by the histrionic abilities of Madame, or has he written a play that he wants you to read?"

"Lyddy, dear," said Elston, looking across the breakfast-table, "is the teapot filled?"

"Yes, Tom; pass your cup."

"No more, thanks, but will you have the goodness to hurl it at this sneering Scribe? No, never mind, we'll forgive him. Then we'll heap coals of fire on his head. We'll get Elchamp to ask him down."

"Thank you," I said, with grim politeness. "May I ask how you came to be on such good terms—ahem, I beg pardon—I mean under the especial patronage of the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants generally of the Borough Road and its vicinity, as Sam Gerridge says, or something like?"

"Ah, yes," said Elston, laughing, "Lord Elchamp insulted my wife first, and then he insulted me."

"That's promising," I said. "Did he kick you?"

"No, by Jove, but I very nearly kicked him."

"Ought to have quite kicked him," I said; "he deserved it?"

"Yes—no. He was only a boy then, and thought it the thing to—"

"Ah, Mr. Scribe," burst out Mrs. Elston, "he's the truest, noblest fellow you ever met."

"So it seems," I said.

"Take a cigarette, and I'll tell you how it was," said Elston, passing his case, and then lighting a cigarette, which he soon let go out, he pursued his story:—

Lydia and I were rather young in the profession ten years ago, but still we were making good headway. Her impersonations had been received with great favour, and on the strength of it we had determined to work hard as students of our greatest dramatists, and do what little we could to raise the profession in the eyes of those with whom we had to deal in country towns.

I determined to work upon the assumption that if my wife and I led a blameless life and devoted the whole of our time in a scholar's spirit to a great profession we had a right to consider ourselves well-educated people, as we were—a lady and gentleman, and to exact the same belief from those we encountered in our tours.

Well, upon one occasion our fortune took us to a large town that I shall not name, where there was an excellent theatre. The lessee, on the whole, made a very good thing out of it; but only at the expense of leading a miserable, grovelling life, through having to submit to, I can call it nothing else, the tyranny of the officers of the two regiments always quartered there. When I say the officers, I mean the foolish young bloods of the regiments, who followed all the customs of past generations of their kind, whose idea of a good joke was to interrupt a piece, chaff the performers, and generally do precisely as they liked in a place which had to depend largely on their patronage for its support.

We got down there in good time, found the town well-posted with bills, and several eulogistic notices in the county paper, taken from those which had appeared in London; eh? which I had sent down? Well, we won't enter into that. I don't believe in hiding your light, if you have one, under a bushel, and many a better man than I has done his bit of Vincent Crummles in his time.

The time came, the house was pretty full and soon became crowded as

the various shops closed ; and playing a very minor part myself, and stage-managing, I had very good cause to be satisfied with the way in which the piece was going. For at times, in provincial towns, years ago, the companies one has had to try and drill into shape have been enough to drive a sentient being mad.

The piece was that favourite evergreen *The Lady of Lyons*, and though I say it as shouldn't say it, as Mrs. Brown would have it, there were few better exponents of the part on the stage—I repeat the remark, my dear, in all sincerity—you need not throw the teapot, it is not ours, and there's company present.

Well, I was Damas, and very warm with my work, as well as with indignation at having my Italian chaffed by young Melnotte, when, at the end of the second act, I was called to my wife's dressing-room to find her in tears.

She was evidently a good deal excited, and disposed to be hysterical, as she ran to me and threw her arms round my neck. By the way (he continued, *par parenthèse*) this was real, and not acting.

"Oh, Tom !" she cried, "if this is to go on, I'm sure I shall break down."

"This ? what ?" I said. "Why, Lyddy, what is the matter ?"

"Those officers in the stage-boxes ; didn't you see ?"

"See ? no ! I've hardly seen the front of the house."

"I cannot bear it !" she cried, hysterically ; "they pay no attention to the piece, and keep on making remarks to one another in a loud voice. It's dreadful ; some things they said were quite insulting, and they were meant for me to hear. Oh, Tom, Tom ! if it were to be always like this I'd sooner beg my bread. No, no !" she cried, clinging to me, "don't be excited. It was foolish of me to take so much notice. There, there, I'm better now. Don't make a scene, dear. I'll try and not listen if they speak again."

"If there's any more of it you shall not play !" I cried, passionately. "The cads ! but there, I'll see that it does not occur again."

"What are you going to do ?"

"See Mr. Cunningham, and make him go round and stop it."

Further conversation was stopped by the warning for the next act, and I hurried away to speak to the lessee and insist upon his securing proper respect on the part of his audience. He, however, was not present, and the piece went on, I having stationed myself at one of the wings, where I could see the two boxes on the prompt side full of young officers, who had evidently come with the intention of having a lark, as they would call it, and the moment my wife appeared their remarks began.

I could see at once that their object was to keep up a running fire of chaff so as to confuse her and make her break down ; but, poor girl, the more they tried, the harder she worked to concentrate her energies upon her part, and to force them, if they had anything in them, to pay respect to the talent she displayed. But it was all in vain, and at last when she directed a piteous glance at me, as if asking help against the unmanly persecution to which she had to submit, I could contain myself no longer.

One of the foremost offenders was a handsome, fair young fellow of about twenty, whose cheeks were flushed and whose loud remarks always evoked bursts of laughter from his companions. Upon two or three occasions solitary voices in the pit and gallery cried, "Hush!" and "Silence!" and "Turn him out!" But these cries only caused the young officers in every part of the house to turn round or rise in their seats to stare hard at the daring person who had ventured to interfere with their pleasure, and I saw at a glance that the place was, as it were, thoroughly in possession of the military, whose will was law.

As I have said, I could contain myself no longer, and was about to ring the curtain down, but acting on the impulse of the moment I made an entry not down in the book for Damas, and strode straight towards the stage-box, cautioning the principal offender.

There was a roar of laughter from the two boxes as I made my appearance, girt with a great cavalry sword, and the fair young man said aloud :—

"I say, you sir, that's not the way to carry a sabre!"

"I am compelled to stop this performance," I said aloud, and I remember now how angry and clear my words sounded, "on account of the behaviour of these young men, whom I have to inform that unless they cease to annoy the actors I shall have them removed."

"Hear, hear!" shouted a solitary voice, dominating the low murmur that arose.

"Who the dayvle?—" cried the fair young man, starting up in company with his companions.

"Sir," I cried sharply, "I am the stage-manager, and the lady whom you have so grossly insulted is my wife."

For answer, the occupants of the two boxes rose and left the house talking loudly, and the words "cad," "insolence," "scoundrel," could be plainly heard.

Then the low buzz of voices began to increase, and there was evidently a great deal of excitement; but the piece went on to the end, and I am bound to say it was rather a lame performance, and I was heartily glad when we got back to the hotel.

There my troubles were not over, for Cunningham, the manager, came in soon after in a terribly excited state, to beg of me to write an ample apology to the officers of both garrisons, to say I was carried away by the heat of the moment, &c. &c.; and I flatly refused.

"But you'll ruin me," he said, wringing his hands. "You don't know what a terrible business this is for me. I shall never get over it."

When he found prayer of no avail he began blustering, and it ended in my threatening that if he did not leave my room I would kick him out, and then he went.

The next morning at breakfast he was with me again, imploring me once more to apologize and using every endeavour to move me, till at last I rose and declared that if he said another word I would leave the town directly.

"What, and not fulfil your engagement?" he said aghast.

"And not fulfil the engagement, sir," I replied. "In fact, I hardly think that I shall allow my wife to appear to-night. I will not if she is to be insulted."

He turned green and spoke in a husky whisper as, in imagination, he evidently conjured up the scene that would ensue.

"Do you know what would happen?" he gasped.

"No, sir, neither do I care," I cried hotly.

"They'd—they'd—they'd wreck the place," he panted. "Oh, for the sake of my poor wife and children, Mr. Elston, don't talk like that," he cried. "I'm pretty safe to clear a hundred if you stay; but if you go, the place will be torn down. You don't know what I have to contend with here."

"It's your own fault, sir, for degrading yourself and submitting to the insults of a set of beardless, thoughtless boys. Once more, Mr. Cunningham, I shall offer no apology, and, what is more, if my wife plays to-night, the first man who utters an insulting remark in her hearing shall be turned out, if I have to do it myself."

I believe the man was afraid of me, and thought me mad, as he slowly left the room; and I was glad to get Lyddy here out for a drive into the fresh, bright country to chase away all thought of the wretched scene of the past night; and we did not return till it was pretty close to the time for going to the theatre.

Mr. Cunningham had been to my hotel a dozen times, and was, I heard, in a terrible state of excitement, for the theatre was certain to be crammed, and he was afraid that we had gone for good.

It was with a sigh of relief, then, that he came in, dripping with perspiration; and he was about to seize the opportunity to beg me once more to apologize, but I would not hear him, and had only to breathe a hint of not acting to silence him at once.

"But there's going to be a terrible row at the house," he moaned.

"I'm glad of it," I said spitefully; and I was just in the humour for facing anything, as, with poor Lyddy, trembling like a leaf, we went down to the theatre, where, so as to be at liberty, I delighted one of the company by asking him to play Damas in my stead.

The house was crammed to excess, the two boxes held the same parties again, and the fair young officer was in his place. I noticed, too, that fully half the audience consisted of redcoats, and I began to feel somewhat excited, for it was evident that, as Cunningham had said, there was going to be a disturbance.

Act after act went on with the audience evidently growing more excited, and Cunningham kept coming to me looking ghastly pale, and half-drunk, or at least he would have been, only that fright set the power of the brandy he kept imbibing at naught.

In my excitement, I kept going to my wife's room, to find her trembling, but ready to assure me that I need not fear for her.

And so the night glided on, till just before the last act, when, on glancing at the box which held the leader of the mischief we expected, I started, for he had gone.

"There's the beginning," I said to myself, biting my lips, and I hesitated. Should I let my wife come on again, or seize the opportunity and take her away?

As I was debating, I saw the young officer return to his seat; the drop-scene rose, and the play went on to the end, when in the midst of deafening applasne, which mine enemy seemed to be leading, my wife was led on by Melnotte, and a great bouquet from the officers' box, and thrown by the fair officer, fell at her feet.

"Surely it is no trick," I said to myself, with a catching of the breath, "they would not be such scoundrels as to play her some diabolical trick."

I could have run forward and seized the bouquet, but I told myself that my suspicions were unjust, and taking it from Melnotte's hand, Madame Pauline then bowed herself off the stage.

There had been no storm, and, back at our hotel, we could congratulate ourselves on the success of the evening.

About twelve the next morning, as I was writing some letters, one of the waiters came in with a scared face, to tell me that one of the officers was below, and wanted to see me.

"Humph! what does he want?" I said to myself. "A challenge, or a horsewhipping for me?"

I felt kinder ugly, as our Yankee brothers say, on taking the card to find it inscribed:—

"VISCOUNT ELCHAMP, 209th *Fusiliers*."

"I'll come down," I said, shortly; and I walked soon after into the room, where I was rather surprised to find my visitor was the fair, handsome young officer of the stage-box; surprised, and not surprised, for I half expected to find a friend with a message from him.

"Mr. Elston, I have called to ask your pardon for what took place the other night. I have felt ever since that I behaved like a confounded cad, and if you'll look over it, I——"

He stopped short, for Lyddy had hurriedly entered the room, in dread of something terrible about to happen to her lord and master, and as she came to my side, with her eyes flashing indignation at the visitor, he bent down, and then said hastily:—

"Mrs. Elston, I have come to ask your pardon. I was going to beg your husband to let me personally tell you my deep regret for my foolish, thoughtless conduct. It was the work of a silly boy, and," he said, smiling frankly, "I am really little more."

"You are wrong, Lord Elchamp," I said, warmly, for the young fellow's winning frankness completely disarmed me, "you are acting the part of a very brave man."

"Not acting," said Lyddy, holding out her hand, which he grasped eagerly and respectfully kissed, while directly afterwards ours met in a firm, hearty grasp, and that has been a thousand times renewed, for he has been and will be to the end, one of our most sterling, dearest friends.

Your cigarette is out, take another (he said, lighting up). Do you know, when people talk about lords, I think they are always considering the title, and not the man, and you know "a man's a man for a' that."

En Passant.

THERE was a disgraceful scene at Covent Garden Theatre towards the close of the opera season. Madame Patti agreed to sing for an Italian charity, but as she had to appear three times that week Mr. Gye refused to let her keep the promise. Many Italians in London visited the manager's refusal on the head of the diva, and one evening, as she appeared at the balcony in the first act of *Il Barbiere*, a storm of yells and groans came from the back of the amphitheatre. Madame Patti left the window with a determination not to go on with the performance, and the curtain was lowered. But soon afterwards, encouraged by the cheers of the great majority of the audience, she reappeared ; and the malcontents, probably apprehensive of rough usage, indulged in no further demonstrations of a hostile nature. Forty years have elapsed since such a scene was witnessed at the opera in London.

DURING his management of the Lyceum Theatre the late Mr. Fechter was frequently visited in his dressing-room by the Prince of Wales, who took lessons from him in the art of "making-up." One day his Royal Highness suddenly presented himself before the Queen in the guise of a mendicant. His dress was tattered, his face begrimed and dirty, and his hair, or rather the wig he employed for the purpose, in appropriate disorder. Her Majesty, not doubting that by some means a genuine beggar had got into the palace, flew in great alarm to a bell, but before the attendants could reach the room the Prince threw off his disguise. He was very proud of the fact that the Queen had not recognised him.

THE cordial reception which Mdlle. Bernhardt met with on her reappearance at the Comédie Française is not without significance. As we pointed out last month, several journals in Paris, either influenced by the clique against her in the theatre or trading upon a passing tendency to disparage her, have lately assailed her with considerable asperity. They misrepresented her proceedings here, invented stories to her disadvantage, and predicted that on her return she would be unfavourably received. This prediction has not been fulfilled, and in order to cover their confusion her assailants have again had recourse to downright falsehood. They speak of the event as a "reconciliation" between Mdlle. Bernhardt and the public. This view is in opposition to two hard facts ; there has been no falling-out, and the actress has not deemed it necessary to make any *amende*. Mdlle. Bernhardt is securely established in public favour, and if her popularity declines it will not be in consequence of attacks made upon her by the press.

MR. FECHTER, meeting Mrs. Chaufrau, a member of his company in America, at a party, adversely criticized a few points in her acting. The lady deemed herself affronted, and soon afterwards Mr. Fechter received the following pleasant letter from her husband :—“Sir,—It has come to my knowledge that on a recent occasion at the house of a friend in this city, you presumed to address to my wife certain remarks disrespectful in their nature, and utterly unworthy of a gentleman. Respect for the family whose hospitality you thus grossly soiled restrains me from expressing the contempt with which you have inspired me, by tweaking your nose in public, but I take the first and only opportunity your careful seclusion of your precious person renders immediately available, of saying upon my personal responsibility that I think you are, what your conduct indicates you to be, a gross blackguard. I shall be at this hotel until five this evening, when I propose to return to Long Branch, New Jersey.”

"PERHAPS," wrote Dickens a few years ago, "no innovation in art was ever accepted with so much favour by so many intelligent persons, pre-committed to and pre-occupied by another system, as Mr. Fechter's Hamlet. I take this to have been the case (as it unquestionably was in London), not because of its picturesqueness, not because of its novelty, not because of its many scattered beauties, but because of its perfect consistency with itself. Its great and satisfying originality was in its possessing the merit of a distinctly conceived and executed idea. Mr. Fechter's Hamlet, a pale, woe-begone Norseman, with long flaxen hair, wearing a strange garb, never associated with the part upon the English stage (if ever seen there at all), and making a piratical swoop upon the whole fleet of little theatrical prescriptions without meaning, or like Dr. Johnson's celebrated friend, with only one idea in them, and that a wrong one, never could have achieved its extraordinary success but for its animation by one pervading purpose, to which all changes were made intelligently subservient."

THE Shah of Persia, it is rumoured, is writing a play ; and men in Teheran are ransacking the vocabulary of praise for terms to employ in reference to it. His Majesty once painted a picture in which a camel in the background was higher than a tree in the foreground, and in which an old mill on the left is not so large as a dog on the right. This canvas he sent to the committee of the annual exhibition, who, of course, did not hang it above the line. In the other case they would soon have been a headless committee. The critics as a body were equally pliant. They eulogized the picture for its depth of tone, artistic grouping, and fineness of sentiment. They maintained that his Majesty was a Raphael and a Meissonier rolled into one. One of the critics, however, was rash enough to hint that the picture lacked feeling. In a few hours he lacked feeling himself, for the simple reason that he lacked a head. The literary critics, therefore, will be on their guard when they speak of the Shah's play.

A CURIOUS institution still exists in Paris, the Society of the Damned. These damned are dramatic authors, and they meet once a month and dine at Brebant's. Their number has no fixed limit, only every member to be eligible must have been hissed. An eminent dramatist is selected as Chairman, and holds the post for three months. His election generally follows close on a splendid failure. M. Meilhac, M. Dumas, *fils*, M. Zola, and M. Offenbach, have all filled the chair, and presided at the monthly dinner. These dinners are given on the last Friday of the month, and are extraordinarily hilarious.

THE CHURCH and Stage Guild has held a meeting. In the course of the proceedings an amusing anecdote was related. A troubadour comes to a priest, and says : "Father, I can't square matters at all. You tell me that all you priests who sing through your noses and look black and sour, go there," pointing upwards, "and that those ladies who sing and dance so beautifully go there," pointing downwards. "Well, I'm in a great fog for if it's a question of where I'll go, I'd rather go with the ladies." A clergyman alleged that actors found a religious life exposed them to ridicule and misconception in the theatre. Miss Louise Willes said that her own experience taught her that it was a very difficult thing indeed to make any direct allusion to religion in a theatre. Still, artists should not be ashamed to own that they went to church and believed in religion ; they could show their faith by the ordering of their lives.

MR. IRVING has been interviewed by the *Whitehall Review* on the subject of his audiences. "It has always appeared to me," said his visitor, "that there is something phenomenal in the mutual understanding that exists between you and your audiences. There is an active sympathy and confidence on both sides which is unique, I fancy, in the history of acting and actors." "I don't know," answered Mr. Irving, with an encouraging smile, "that it is without parallel ; but in presence

of my audience I feel as safe and content as when sitting down with an old friend." "Have you under the influence of an audience ever altered your first idea during the course of a first representation?" "Except once, no. I can always tell when the audience is with me. It was not with me in *Vanderdecken*, and I changed the last scene. Neither was it on the first night of *Hamlet*. I then felt that the audience did not go with me until the first meeting with Ophelia. Now I know that they like it—are with me, heart and soul. *Hamlet* has been my greatest pecuniary success. Except at a benefit performance, I had never played the character before that first night at the Lyceum. Indeed, so far as regards what is called the classic and legitimate drama, my successes, such as they were, had been made outside it, really in eccentric comedy. As a rule, actors who have appeared for the first time in London in such parts as Richard III., Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello, have played them previously for years in the country. My audiences knew this, and I am sure they estimated the performance accordingly, giving me their special sympathy and good wishes. I believe in the justice of audiences; they are sincere and hearty in their approval of what they like, and have the greatest hand in making an actor's reputation. Journalistic power cannot be overvalued; it is enormous: but in regard to actors it is a remarkable fact that their permanent reputations, the final and lasting verdict of their merits, are made chiefly by their audiences. I am quite certain that within twelve hours of the production of a new play of any importance all London knows whether the piece is a success or a failure, no matter whether it has been noticed in the papers or not. Each one of the audience is the centre of a little coterie, and the word is passed on from one to the other. I confess I am happiest in the presence of what you call the regular play-going public. I am apt to become depressed on a first night. I know that while there is a good hearty crowd who have come to be pleased, there are some who have *not* come to be pleased. Audiences are intellectually active, and find many ways of showing their opinions. One night, in *Hamlet*, something was thrown on the stage from the gallery. The donor was a sad-looking woman, evidently very poor, who said she often came to the Lyceum gallery, and wanted me to have this little heirloom. Here it is—an old-fashioned gold cross. On both sides is engraved 'Faith, Hope, and Charity'; on the obverse, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins'; and on the reverse, 'I scorn to change or fear.' They said in front that she was a poor mother who had lost her son. At Sheffield one night, in the grouse season, a man in the gallery threw a brace of birds on the stage with a rough note of thanks and compliments, and one of the pit audience sent me round a knife which he had made himself. The people who do these things have nothing to gain, they judge for themselves, and they are representative of that great public opinion which in the end is always right. When they are against you it is hard at the time to be convinced that you are wrong; *but you are.*"

M. DUMAS has a fine collection of pictures, some of which, according to the *Parisian*, were obtained in a curious way. M. Vollon, the painter, is an early riser; so is M. Dumas. M. Vollon is a great billiard-player, so is M. Dumas. The painter arrives at the dramatist's house early, say seven o'clock in the morning. The genial Alexandre proposes a game, which is agreed to. "What shall we play for?" "I should like a complete set of Shakspere," says the painter. "Very good; a Shakspere against a water-colour." M. Dumas is much the stronger player of the two, but sometimes, from remorse, he lets his adversary win. Hence the painter enriches his library and the dramatist his picture-gallery.

THE Greenock *Advertiser* has just drawn attention to an innovation which cannot be too soon abandoned. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Knight, the American players, now on a tour in Great Britain, have advertised the opinions expressed as to their acting by "Mr. Timmins, of the *Birmingham Daily Post*, Mr. Silvester, of the

Birmingham Daily Gazette, and Mr. Jennings, of the *Birmingham Daily Mail*." That a high value should be set by the Americans upon those opinions is natural enough. The writers referred to are among the keenest and most lettered critics in the country. But it is a question whether Mr. and Mrs. Knight would not have done better if they had given only the names of the journals. Much of the influence of the press depends upon the vague impression abroad that the utterances of a newspaper are those of a corporate body rather than of an individual. For example, an unsigned article in *The Times* has a more lasting effect upon public opinion than one signed by Mr. Gladstone would have. The former is accepted as an embodiment of the views of a far-seeing and unbiased committee ; the latter, while attracting more attention, would be regarded as an expression of individual opinion. By advertising press opinions in such a way, therefore, Mr. and Mrs. Knight materially diminish the force of the praise, besides suggesting to the dramatic critics who object to their names being paraded in public the advisability of writing in such a form as to render quotation a difficult matter.

ONCE upon a time there was the editor of a newspaper who had a very efficient musical critic, who had, in turn, a son with a very remarkable voice. The boy developed into a fine baritone, and made a professional *début* under a stage name. There seemed to the proud father very little doubt of his son's wonderful ability. The other critics were in raptures about him ; the audience encored him repeatedly. The father, however, aware that paternal love influences the ears as well as the eyes, determined not to be partial. The next day all the other papers applauded the new baritone ; the father's paper said, " In regard to Mr. Decourci, the new baritone, we reserve our opinion." The editor sent for his critic, and said unto him, " I see that all the other papers have discovered a new baritone, but you reserve your opinion. Why ?" " Because the new baritone is my own son." " Is he a fine baritone ?" " I believe him to be one of the best on the stage." " And how long ago did you discover this ?" " At the first rehearsal of the opera." " Will you kindly inform me why you did not say so at once, and so give our paper the credit of this discovery a fortnight in advance of the other journals ?" " Sir, I repeat, because he is my son." " That is no excuse," answered the editor, judicially. " You are fined a week's salary for inattention to duty. It is of no advantage to our journal that its writers should have geniuses for children unless it be that we are thus secured the earliest artistic intelligence."

THE news of the death of Mrs. Sartoris will be received with sincere regret. Better known as Adelaide Kemble and as the niece of Mrs. Siddons, she appeared on the stage in London in 1833, but did not create much effect. Subsequently she went on the Continent to complete her education as a public singer, and, appearing in Venice as Norma, obtained a brilliant success. For some years she sang almost exclusively in Italy, returning to England in 1841 on account of the serious illness of her father, Charles Kemble. During the course of the two following years she sang frequently in London, but finally retired from the stage in 1843 on her marriage with Mr. Sartoris, of Tichfield, Hants. In 1867, she published, in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *A Week in a French Country-house*, in which Sir Frederick Leighton and many others were sketched, and in the following year *Medusa*.

MR. JOHN NELSON died at Preston on the 25th July from the bursting of a blood-vessel in the lungs, caused by over-exertion on the previous night in the character of Melnotte. The son of a farmer in the west of Cumberland, he became an actor by profession in 1859, and about two years ago married Miss Carlotta Leclercq. It was he who played Romeo when Miss Neilson first appeared in London as Juliet. The deaths are also announced of Mr. Carton, the American comedian, and of Miss Minnie Walton. The latter, a native of Sydney, New South Wales, accompanied Mr. Sothern on a tour through the United States in 1873, and in the following year was to be found supporting him in London.

THE musical world in Vienna mourns the loss of Karl Beck, the tenor who first sang the music of *Lohengrin*. He was a true musical Bohemian of the Troubadour class, always thirsty and fond of Cliquot. At St. Petersburg, in the zenith of his fame and glory, he was invited by the Czar to a private interview. "Beck," said his Majesty, when the artist entered the room, "ask for anything you like." "I should like to take a glass of wine with your Majesty," was the reply. They drank together, but two days later Beck was ordered to pack up and leave the country. After he had lost his voice, he kept a café at Prague, where Bohemians were wont to congregate.

THE superstitions of players are many and various, and are astonishing by reason of their simplicity. Recently, in a pleasant after-dinner conversation, Mr. Boucicault made a series of curious revelations. He remarked especially upon the superstitions of ballet-dancers. Every grade of the ballet in England and on the Continent is a slave to superstition. For instance, in his *Babil and Bijou* a première danseuse and twenty coryphées rebelled at the full-dress rehearsal because the scene in which they had to dance was entirely in blue, without any adornments of silver. Blue is an unlucky colour among players all the world over, silver being its only saving relief. In the English theatres, to trip on entering on the scene on the first night of a play is a sure sign of success. To receive a bouquet at the stage-door before the play begins is an omen of failure.

IN America, too, some strange superstitions prevail. When the *Black Crook* was ready for production at Niblo's Garden, under the management of Mr. Wheatley, Mr. Jarrett, and Mr. Palmer, the first-named was very nervous about it. Everything depended on its success. Failure meant ruin, and he could no view the situation as calmly as his partners did. The theatre was all lighted up, the carpenters had "set" the first two scenes, the ballet and dramatic people were dressing, the doorkeepers stood at their posts, and Flanagan, the janitor, had his hand on the bolts ready to throw open the stained-glass doors that kept out the clamorous crowd that had gathered in the hallway. Mr. Wheatley, standing beside the gate with his partners, gave the signal for opening the doors, and the rush began. The first person who reached the ticket-taker was a lady, accompanied by a little boy. Mr. Wheatley leaned over the rail and thrust her outside, at the same time pushing a man, the next in turn, inside the railing. Then, raising his hat politely to the lady, he apologized and escorted her to the usher himself. "It would never do," he afterwards said to a friend, "to allow a woman to be the first to enter the theatre on a first night. It's unlucky; let a man in first and you are all right." *The Crook* was very successful, and no argument could convince Mr. Wheatley that he had not saved it by thrusting a man in first.

A FEW more words on this subject. In America, as in England, the player has a superstitious objection to rehearsals on the Sabbath. During the rehearsals of *Leo and Lotos* at Niblo's Garden there were two Sunday-night rehearsals, and at each it was found necessary to lock the doors at 11 p.m. to keep the dancing-girls from running away. Even then some got out of the green-room windows into Crosby-street, climbed over the iron railings, and escaped. It is believed that salaries will not be paid regularly during the run of a piece rehearsed on Sundays, or that the piece itself will be a failure, or that a death will occur in the company. This was predicted at the Sunday rehearsals of *The Crook*, and the croakings of the ballet-girls were verified by the sudden death of a soubrette. At the Grand Opera House, during Mr. Fisk's term of management, Sunday rehearsals were enforced in spite of the protests of the company. When the great spectacle *Lalla Rookh* was preparing there were three Sunday representations, and the birds of ill-omen were loud in their predictions of disaster. Mr. Fisk was shot and killed before the fourth Sunday night revel, and the piece, although magnificently presented to the public, did not prove remunerative.

At the Play.

I N L O N D O N .

TO those who like lively reckless nonsense and are unfamiliar with MM. Hennequin and Najac's highly entertaining, if extremely improper *Bébé*, Mr. Burnand's *Betsy* will doubtless appear to be a satisfactory work of its kind, since its progress is sure to be accompanied by hearty laughter from first to last, and little more than laughter is looked for at the Criterion. MM. Hennequin and Najac were, it will be recollected, the authors of *Les Dominos Roses*, from which Mr. Albery was unable or unwilling to abstract the full and suspicious flavour that most people thought characteristic of the witty comedy. Mr. Burnand had in *Bébé* a more risky but a far less clever play to deal with; and it reflects much credit alike upon his ingenious manipulation and upon the purity of his taste that *Betsy*, if occasionally rather pointless in its preposterousness, is completely inoffensive, except to those who choose to read between the lines in a manner perfectly unnecessary. The story of *Betsy* is simply another illustration of the folly of a woman who, after she has tied a lad to her apron-strings, is surprised to find that within the bounds of his tether the youth develops his precocity with concentrated vigour. Young Adolphus Birkett is not at all particular to whom he makes love, provided only that he can get the slightest attention paid to him; and it is only because there is no real harm in his Don-Juanlike proceeding, that he escapes scot-free from the result of his too general attentions. In the course of his development, and before he becomes *rangé*, Mr. Birkett naturally gets into all sorts of scrapes, which are skilfully arranged with an eye to comic effect; and if there is little that suggests anything in the plot save farce, there is plenty to secure the perpetual merriment of the audience. The dialogue, too, has plenty of vivacity, and the several characters allotted to the chief players engaged are so drawn as to have abundant individuality, even though they have comparatively little verisimilitude. Besides Adolphus, or the *bébé*, who is sketched by Mr. Lytton Sothern with charming freshness and sincerity, and brings out his capacity of the young actor for original creation, there are an old gentleman, most humorously played by Mr. W. J. Hill in his best manner, an Irish Captain delineated with judicious art by Mr. H. Standing, and other rôles, both safe and effective, in the hands of Mrs. Stephens, Mr. Maltby, and Miss Rorke. Last and by no means least, there is Betsy herself, who could not well have a brighter, daintier representative than Miss Lottie Venne, perhaps the best soubrette, after Mrs. Bancroft, now on our stage. Altogether *Betsy* fulfils exactly what is wanted of it, and with all its readily discoverable defects seems likely to do better at the Criterion than might many a better piece.

AN important new venture at the Olympic during the past month met, like another at the Lyceum, with but scant practical success. *The Worship of Bacchus*, however, by Messrs. Paul Meritt and Henry Pettitt, was by

no means a failure of the pattern of *Zillah*, although it was a sample of dramatic art of a very inferior description. Given a yokel, who, in the vortex of London life ruins himself by dissipation ; given his imprisonment on a charge of which he is innocent ; given also his ultimate reformation and re-establishment in his happy country cottage whilst the bad companions who compassed his fall are duly punished—given all these elements, and an experienced manufacturer of dramatic wares like Mr. Meritt and his collaborator might be expected to form thereof a workable domestic drama suitable for the introduction of what are called realistic effects, and able to command the interest of playgoers of a certain class. Why, however, Miss Fanny Josephs as manageress should select dramatic fare of this quality for her theatre, and why as a refined actress of comedy she should choose to take a part in the representation, must remain a puzzle difficult of solution. It may be that the evils of the gin-shop, which are suggested in the title borrowed from Cruikshank's well-known picture, are usefully attacked in plays such as this ; but the remedy is not, upon the whole, either pleasant or profitable to the audience which one expects to see attracted to the Olympic. That Messrs. W. H. Vernon and Righton and Miss L. Moodie and Miss F. Josephs did all which good acting could accomplish for *The Worship of Bacchus* need scarcely be said ; but they are to be congratulated upon the shortness of their association with a work which did not demand high artistic illustration, and might well have been reserved for a theatre, a company, and an audience of another stamp.

The Worship of Bacchus has since been followed by a play called *Davy Crockett*, humorously described as an “idyl of the backwoods.” The hero of the idyl is a gentleman who possesses plenty of muscle, plenty of confidence in himself, and a fine taste for tall talk. He bars a door against wolves, carries off his lady-love, à la *Lochinvar*, just as she is about to become the bride of “another,” and conducts himself generally after the fashion approved in novels which have their scene in the Far West. Mr. Frank Mayo looks his favourite part capitally, and as he has played it about two thousand times in America, where he has doubtless profited by the criticisms of experts, he is quite at home as the dashing Mr. Crockett. But if the truth be told the character is not very interesting, at any rate to us ; and the drama in which he seems to be the *raison d'être* has little save his individuality to provide a thread on which to hang its five acts. Miss Emma Ritta, Mr. Luigi Lablache, and Mr. Clifford Cooper give Mr. Mayo all the support that he needs from them. *Davy Crockett* is a new experiment upon our stage, and as such it is curious, and seems to meet a certain popularity ; but it is certainly not worth repeating.

MISS GENEVIÈVE WARD, an actress who has unfortunately had but few opportunities of showing to London audiences the art and the power of her Lady Macbeth, her Queen Katherine, and her efforts with other characters of whom capable representatives are scarce, commenced her holiday season at the Lyceum with a most unhappy production. *Zillah*, as Messrs. Palgrave Simpson and C. Templar has called it, had, we believe, the disadvantage of being injudiciously altered at rehearsal, and upon the important omission thus brought about some of its ill-fate may very well depend. In

any case, however, *Zillah* is a dramatic work unworthy alike of the reputation of Mr. Palgrave Simpson and of the ability of Mr. Templar, who has written an exquisitely touching little story in this month's *Temple Bar*. Its object was to supply Miss Ward with rôles which she might "double," after the effective manner employed in *The Courier of Lyons*; its result was a burlesqued melodrama unintelligible except as a joke, and wholly beside the mark. *Zillah* is noteworthy only as one of the few instances in which an unfriendly and satirical audience has been thoroughly justified in its outspoken and light-hearted condemnation of a play by the dangerous medium of "chaff."

As a stop-gap, Miss Ward resorted to a version of Victor Hugo's *Lucrezia Borgia* by Mr. W. Young, which enabled her to display to much advantage her command of intense tragedy, as well as to give life by her variety of tone and manner to an exceptionally gloomy play. Mr. J. H. Barnes as Duke Alfonso, and Mr. W. Herbert as Gennaro were fairly efficient, and Miss Ward won the highest appreciation for her own impassioned performance. As Meg Merrilies also, in the old musical play *Guy Mannering*, Miss Ward gave convincing proofs of her ability to deal with types of character rarely illustrated with such a combination of force, refinement, and sense of artistic propriety.

At the Haymarket further proofs, if any were needed, have been afforded of the degeneration of what used to be our leading comedy theatre, and further ground is discovered for satisfaction with the approaching change of its conduct. The spectacle of the manager who conducted it prosperously for years appearing before the public almost as a beggar, is anything but edifying, and the class of performance given for his "benefit" was precisely what might, under the circumstances, be expected. It is to be hoped that of our French visitors none of them stayed to see what Mr. Barry Sullivan and his coadjutors made out of Shakspere's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*. Mr. Sullivan, Miss Eytinge, and their scratch company doubtless meant well, as they afterwards did with that lively drama *The Stranger*; but their good intentions afford only a very insufficient excuse for their strange proceedings. The question *cui bono?* must be sadly asked concerning these wretched exhibitions of pretentious incompetence, and it is pleasant to know that under its new *régime* the once famous theatre will know them no more.

Out of an episode which was introduced into *Ordeal by Touch*, a drama by Mr. Richard Lee, in which Mrs. Scott Siddons appeared at the Queen's Theatre some time since, the author has now made a neat little comedietta. This is being given at the Vaudeville under the title of *Home for Home*, with decided success. It is a brightly-written and carefully-finished sketch of the result of a conversation at cross purposes, in which a lady believes herself sued for her hand, when, as a matter of fact, her companion is proposing to take her house. In this trifle Mr. H. Howe, so long honourably connected with the Haymarket, makes his first appearance in the company which he has now so fortunately joined; and he suggests a dear old country parson, very unlike the ordinary clergyman of the stage. Miss Larkin helps Mr. Howe to bring out the full point of this very pleasant miniature comedy, the success of which should encourage Mr. Lee to persevere in his dramatic labours.

IN THE PROVINCES.

IN the third week of the month Miss Ellen Terry commenced an engagement at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, as Lilian Vavasour in *New Men and Old Acres*. "Miss Terry," says the *Daily Mail*, "is now to be seen, not in her best, but in one of her finest, impersonations. Circumstances unhappily would not permit of her appearing as Ophelia, a part in which she has no equal. The stronger phases of passion—anger, resentment, or remorse—are scarcely as well-suited to her as the pathetic tenderness and soft emotion which appear to animate every action and influence every thought. In *New Men and Old Acres* the incomparable freshness and grace of Miss Terry's acting are revealed with striking effect. She possesses in every sense the qualifications demanded by such a character. The fine, expressive face beaming with lively wit and quick intelligence, the symmetrical figure, the unaffected and effortless grace, combined with a becoming elegance of manner and wayward archness and buoyancy, all lend a picturqueness to the embodiment rarely seen upon the stage. There is a world of tenderness and emotional feeling in her pleadings on behalf of her old favourites when, with a throbbing voice and a face betokening the strongest mental anguish, she begs him to be kind to her old dog and the peacock. And this Lilian's love is by no means of the lackadaisical order. It is a strong and noble impulse, self-sacrificing and womanly, and in no scene is the delicate power of Miss Terry more strongly revealed than where she cuts short the fervent outpourings of her admirer by freely confessing that the passion is reciprocated. There is nothing exaggerated in the wild burst of anguish at parting from her lover; the intensity of her grief is as natural as the sparkling vivacity of the lighter passages, but there is an infinity of subdued power in her portrayal of the sorrow-stricken maiden which is the surest indication of true genius. The mute eloquence in the overcast face and glistening eyes finds a response in every heart. She can scarcely bring out the few husky notes for her choking sobs which struggle for mastery, and then, unable to withstand the torrent of her emotions she throws herself upon the couch, a wonderful picture of despair." The *Gazette* speaks of Miss Terry's Lilian as a "highly-intelligent and exquisitely-womanly assumption, free from any tendency to exaggeration, and as true to nature as to art." In the same week that Miss Terry appeared *Boulogne* was played by one of Mr. Hollingshead's companies at the other theatre in the town.

Mr. Hare and Mr. and Mrs. Kendal began a tour on the 18th, opening at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, in the *Ladies' Battle*. "The provinces," writes "Bayard," "have a crow to pluck with London. It is the lot of the provinces to raise actors and actresses, afford them the opportunities for training and cultivating themselves; to encourage their budding talents, condone their errors, and tolerate their rawness and inexperience, and just as they begin to make their performances acceptable they give us the slip and repair to London, the playgoers of which place thus reap where we have sown, or, leaving metaphor aside, enjoy the matured talents of the artiste without having had to put up with the inflictions to which we, alas! were

subjected during his apprenticeship. But—and herein lies the gist of my grievance—I could forgive all this, and would not even mind remembering London in my will, if it would only consent to let us have Mrs. Kendal a reasonable part of the year. Why should her visits resemble those of angels in the unfortunate particular of being few and far between? Is Manchester to have her only twelve nights out of the twelve months? And so I say again that this London monopoly of Mrs. Kendal is becoming simply unbearable. Let London be warned in time! Either the just demands of the provinces, with Manchester, not Kendal, at their head, must be conceded, or I will not answer for the consequences. We have surely enough to put up with already—a bad harvest, depression of trade, and so on. The country will not, in addition, tolerate being deprived of Mrs. Kendal for all but the fraction of every twelvemonth. Our legislators will look rather blank if when they assemble at St. Stephen's in February next it is to learn that the country is on the brink of revolution, and that a vast army is being congregated at Old Trafford for the purpose of marching on the capital and carrying off Mrs. Kendal and the St. James's Theatre in order to transplant them in Cottonopolis."

DURING the month Mr. Toole appeared at Dublin, Cork, and in the south coast of England. The *Freeman's Journal*, speaking of his acting in *Dot*, says, "Mr. Toole gave us a perfect picture of the sad, kind-hearted, crushed-down old man. His grief was not loud, blustering, or prosaic; it was the poetry of sorrow. The tableau in which he threads the needle for his blind daughter, and that in which he tells her that he had deceived her all her life, are likely to be long remembered by all who saw and enjoyed them." In the course of a speech to the audience one night he said he had brought over an attack of gout with him to Ireland, but he would leave it after him when he departed. He verily believed that their good-humour and applause had charmed it away. It was on that stage he had first appeared, and it was to the favour with which he had been then received that he attributed any success he had subsequently attained. He would in a few moments appear in the character in which he had first appeared, and he believed in the same clothes, and he trusted the audience would find that neither the costume nor the actor was very much the worse for wear. Early in the month *The Girls* started at Birmingham upon what seems likely to be a prosperous tour. Mr. J. C. Cowper is Plantagenet Potter, and Mr. Pitt the sculptor. Miss Bateman brought out at Manchester a piece entitled *Faith*, in which a mother, in order to save her son from evil courses, gives up her husband—who, although a law-breaker, yet possesses her affections—to justice. Notwithstanding the excellence of Miss Bateman's acting, the piece did not succeed. Mr. Flockton created some effect in the south-west of England as Charles I. in a new play; and among those on tour we also find Miss Heath, Miss Fowler, Mr. Billington, Mr. Emmet, Miss Rose Leclercq, and the *Drink*, *Pinafore*, and *Truth* companies.

IN PARIS.

THE Comédie Française was reopened early in August with *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*. During the absence of the company

the interior of the theatre was liberally redecorated, the general effect of the changes being to make the salle appear larger than before. On the ceiling, painted by M. Mazerolles, a lifelong friend of M. Perrin, Molière is seen on the left and Corneille and Racine on the right of an allegorical figure of France, and the principal characters in the plays of the three dramatists are picturesquely scattered about. The whole strength of the company was employed in the performances, in the latter of which, by the way, M. Thiron appeared for the first time as Argan. *Le Malade Imaginaire* over, the curtain rose upon the hall of the faculty, and the children of Molière, in appropriate costume, came on in a sort of procession and ranged themselves on the right and left of the stage. The appearance of Mdlle. Bernhardt, who had been warned by several journalists that on her reappearance she would be ill-received on account of her proceedings in London, was followed by a general and prolonged thunder of applause. In spite of the oppressive warmth of the weather, the *Frauçais* has been well attended. As is usual in the month of August, there is but little to record in the way of theatricals. M. Vaucorbeil, who has initiated a variety of reforms in the management of the Grand Opera, has revived *Le Roi de Lahore*, M. Lassalle being the Scindia, and Mdlle. Baux, in lieu of Mdlle. de Reské, the Sita. Mdlle. Leslino, from Marseilles, and Mdlle. Hamann, a successful pupil at the Conservatoire, soon afterwards made their *début* at the opera in the *Huguenots*. The voice of the former, if not very flexible, is excellent in its medium notes, and may be turned to good account. Mdlle. Hamann is a pleasing singer, but has yet much to learn. Two novelties have been brought out at the Troisième Théâtre Français—*A Trois de Jeu*, a piece in one act, by M. Almaric, and *La Veuve Chapuzot*, by a young writer named Vilabrége. The widow in the latter, who is on the eve of marriage with a banker, takes a malicious pleasure in sowing dissension between a young husband and wife, though for what reason is not very clear. The moral of the story, at any rate, is excellent; the lady's machinations are defeated, and the banker, apprised of all, declines to marry her. Whatever the faults of the plot may be, the dialogue is above the average. The Folies Dramatiques has been re-opened with *Madame Favart*, which, although represented a hundred and fifty times last season, has not yet exhausted its popularity. *Les Cloches de Corneville* and *Madame Angot* are, however, in preparation there. Most of the theatres will re-open early this month. The most successful house during the summer has been the Porte St. Martin, where, thanks to *Les Mystères de Paris*, 86,000 francs were taken during the very untheatrical month of July.

IN BERLIN.

THE guests from the Vienna Burgtheater left Berlin early in August without having made any noteworthy addition to the programmes which we noticed last month, and dulness prevailed in the theatrical world during the rest of the month. We take the opportunity thus afforded us to review the past season at the leading theatres. At the Royal Playhouse the season lasted from the 24th August last year to the 14th of June, and during its

course no fewer than ninety-eight pieces were performed. Of these only three were new, and only one of the novelties was a success, namely, Herr Hugo Bürger's comedy, *Die Frau ohne Geist*, which was performed twenty-three times, a long run for a house with such a large repertory and such a constantly-changing programme. The old drama was much cultivated. Ten of Shakspere's plays were given during the season—namely, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV.* parts 1 and 2, *King Lear*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Richard I.*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The works of the classical dramatists of Germany were frequently represented, five of Goethe's plays being given, ten of Schiller's, and one of Lessing's, while even the ancient Greek drama was not neglected, *Antigone*, *Medea*, and *Phædra*, being each performed a couple of times. The Royal Playhouse devotes little attention to the French drama, and we find but six French plays in the long list of the productions of the season, namely, Molière's *Tartuffe*, a couple of Scribe's works, and such modern pieces as *Gringoire* and *Le Luthier de Crémone*. But if the leading theatre depended little upon the French drama, the Residenz Theater lived almost exclusively throughout the past season upon adaptations from the French. The latter house is conducted upon the long-run system, like our London theatres and like all the Paris theatres except the Comédie Française. M. Paul Ferrier's *Femme de Chambre*, produced early in the season under the title of *Die Kammerzofe*, was fairly successful, and had a run of thirty-one nights. Next came M. Augier's *Lionnes Pauvres*, which was played for three weeks pending the preparation of a German version of the same writer's latest comedy, *Les Fourchambault*, which was produced here at the end of last October with great success, and had a consecutive run of seventy-four nights, and was performed in all 110 times during the season, as it was afterwards revived owing to the failure of subsequent productions. The *Mdlle. de Belle-Isle* of the elder Dumas and *Le Bourgeois de Pontarcy* of M. Sardou met with little favour, each being withdrawn after a run of a fortnight. Still less success attended an attempt to borrow from the Italian stage the *Due Dame* of Signor Paolo Ferrari. We may here mention that the Royal Playhouse also adopted with little success a production of the modern Italian stage in the *Partita a Scacchi* of Signor Giacosa. Turning to the Wallner Theater, which is also conducted on the long-run system, we find that the great success of the season was obtained by a new comedy from the pen of a German dramatist, Herr L'Arronge, entitled *Doctor Klaus*, which maintained its place in the bills for 120 nights, and was then transferred to another theatre, where its prosperous career still continues. The other most successful production of the season was a play entitled *Ihre Familie*, the authors of which were evidently indebted to Mr. Robertson's *Caste* for the outline of their plot.

IN VIENNA.

As the *saison morte* continues up to the 1st of September, when the Burg and Stadt Theatres resume work, we propose to devote our space this month to a continuation of our review of the past season. Last month we disposed

of the Burgtheater. The season at the Stadttheater was of shorter duration, and terminated in a crisis which threatens to deprive that house of the able guidance of Herr Laube, it being proposed to entrust the management to a committee of four of the leading members of the company, an interesting but doubtful experiment which we shall watch attentively. During his last season, Herr Laube vied with the manager of the Burgtheater in giving the frequenters of his theatre a varied bill of fare, ranging from *King Lear* to the *Pink Dominos*. Unlike the manager of the leading theatre, Herr Laube borrows freely from the contemporary productions of the Paris stage; but in this respect he did not attain much success last season. M. Augier's *Les Fourchambault*, which proved highly attractive in Berlin, met with little favour here, perhaps owing to certain deficiencies in the cast. Nor did the *Mari d'Ida* of Messrs. Delacour and Mancel, produced here under the title of *Der Seifensieder*, or the *Poudre d'Escampette* of M. Hennequin make much mark. Some new pieces of Herr Willbrandt, such as *Der Thurm in der Stadtmauer* and *Auf den Brettern*, were more successful, no small share of the credit being due to the acting of the author's wife, Frau Willbrandt-Bandius, whose engagement was one of the happiest features of the season. Herr Laube's own historical play, *Prinz Friedrich*, must be named amongst the successes of the year, as must also some older works of living French dramatists, such as the *Ferréol* of M. Sardou, the *Fils Naturel* of M. Dumas, and the *Gendre de Monsieur Poirier* of M. Augier, which were now for the first time produced on this stage. Turning to the Carl Theater, of which Herr Teweile assumed the management last September, one may congratulate that actor-manager on the results of his first season. His programmes consisted mainly of lively farcical pieces of French origin and of opéra-bouffe. Amongst the former the most successful was the *Niniche* of Messrs. Hennequin and Millaud, which was played some fifty times. *Doctor Klaus*, one of the greatest successes of the season at Berlin, also proved attractive here, and was played over thirty times. As for opéra-bouffe, M. Lecocq's *Petit Duc* had a run of twenty nights early in the season, but was afterwards thrown into the shade by the production of *Boccaccio*, a new work of a native composer, Herr von Suppé, whose *Fatinitza* has made the round of Europe.

IN ROME.

AT this dull season the Roman critics glance backwards and find little that is consoling in a review of the dramatic doings of the past year. We shall not follow them in the dull retrospect; but it is worth while observing that the necessity for state or municipal aid to the theatre is beginning to be felt in Italy, and to find loud expression in certain quarters. It is felt that the greatest lights of the contemporary Italian stage should be induced to shed their lustre upon the native boards, instead of appealing constantly to the uncertain appreciation of foreigners imperfectly acquainted with the Italian tongue. But, in the present hand-to-mouth existence of the Italian dramatic theatres, the managers are unable to enlist the services of such

artists as Ristori, Salvini, and Rossi, who have for years sought fortune in any country but their own. Signora Pezzana, too, who has not such a widely-spread reputation, has of late almost confined herself to Spain, whither she is about to be followed, we regret to state, by Signora Marini, in whom the hopes of the Italian stage have of late been centred. The prospect, therefore, is at present no brighter than the retrospect. At the moment only two dramatic theatres are open, namely, those popular houses known as the Corea and the Quirino, both of which have sought to break the run of ill-luck by producing Italian versions of the *Assommoir* of M. Zola. The Corea, now under the management of Signor Lavaggi, was first in the field with this sensational realistic production. The manager seems to have built great hopes upon the *delirium tremens* scene, but though he himself acted the part of Coupeau with no little skill and power, he failed to impress the audience, and the very scene which was expected to have made the fortune of the piece was so angrily condemned by the house that it was thought prudent to omit it in subsequent representations. Not deterred by the adverse reception given to the *Assommoir* at the rival theatre, Signor Schiavoni a few days afterwards essayed the part of Coupeau at the Quirino, proclaiming his version to be the only authentic adaptation of the French original. The audience, however, cared little for its authenticity, and were not more favourably impressed than by Signor Lavaggi's unfortunate version. Habitual drunkenness is almost an unknown vice in Italy, and M. Zola's graphic picture of its consequences did not appeal to a popular Italian audience. At the end of July the Manzoni Theatre reopened with a very meritorious performance of Luigi Ricci's delightful opera, *Il Birraio di Preston*, which had not been heard in Rome for many years, and in which Signora Soarez, a pupil of the Milan Conservatoire, produced a very favourable impression.

IN MADRID.

ALL the theatres except the Alhambra are now closed, and the performances at that house do not call for much notice. Towards the end of July, Signor Mercuri's new opera, *El Violin del Diablo*, was produced with considerable success. The story bears a kind of inverted resemblance to the legend of Faust, but here it is the Marguerite that sells herself to the evil one. The latter is represented by one Doctor Mateo, who offers the heroine, a gipsy girl, the means of gaining the affection of a nobleman with whom she has fallen in love. The doctor gives the maiden a diabolic violin, the magical strains of which have the property of exciting in him who hears them a strange desire to be passionately beloved. The nobleman hears and is enamoured, but his love is short-lived, and the gipsy girl, deserted, dies of grief. The music is of merit, and frequently awakens memories of Wagner and Gounod. Doctor Mateo, an effective part, was well rendered by Signor Giraldoni, while Signora Carolina Ferni found good scope for the display of her powers, both vocal and histrionic, in the part of the gipsy girl. The rest of the cast, however, left much to be desired.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

MADAME NILSSON is engaged for the Paris Opera season of 1880-1. In October she sings at Mr. Kuhé's concert in Brighton, and will thence proceed to fulfil her engagement at Madrid. She is now at Mont d'Or.

MR. IRVING joined Lady Burdett-Coutts's yachting party at Weymouth on the 31st July. He is expected to return on the 10th or 11th for the rehearsals of *The Iron Chest*. The party arrived at Malta on the 22nd August.

MADAME PATTI is staying at Cadoxton Lodge, near Bridgend, in Glamorganshire, as Craig-y-nos Castle is undergoing alterations. In January she will give twelve opera performances in Austria and Germany, beginning at Vienna. Her Paris engagement begins on the 14th February next, the obstacles put in the way of it by the Marquis de Caux having been removed.

SIGNOR SALVINI will appear at the Teatro del Verme, Milan, in the second half of October.

As we anticipated would be the case, the differences between Mdlle. Bernhardt and the Comédie Française have been adjusted. The regulations have been set aside so far as to allow her to become a *sociétaire à part entière* and take a holiday of seven months in order to fulfil the engagements she entered into in London. The clique against her in the theatre is now more bitter than ever, but after such a recognition of her value she may well look forward with confidence to the future.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT will reappear at the Gaiety Theatre next May, supported by players from the Odéon and other Parisian theatres. She is to play three times a week, and on the other nights M. Coquelin afné will appear in comedy. This engagement fulfilled, the Palais Royal Company will have a short season at the same theatre.

MADAME RISTORI goes on a tour this autumn, beginning at Vienna.

THE value of the property possessed by Mr. Fechter is estimated at between £3,000 and £4,000, one-fourth of which will go in payment of debts. His remains have been interred in Mount Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia.

Davenant is to be played at the Comédie Française. M. Delaire's *Garat* is in rehearsal there, and it is not improbable that M. Dumas's *Kean* will follow.

MISS NEILSON has been staying for a week or two at Bowness, Windermere, prior to her departure for America. Her performances at the Haymarket Theatre attracted large audiences, and on her last night a beautiful basket of flowers was presented to her on the stage by some admirers from San Francisco. Miss Neilson, let it be added, is much better, and during the season, as before, was the observed of all observers as, accompanied by her *dame de compagnie*, she strolled in the morning under the trees in the park or drove in the afternoon in the procession on the Row. Whoever, a correspondent says, may be the happy man for whose sake she is going to retire from the stage—always supposing that he really exists—his name has up to this time been kept profoundly secret.

THE American engagements of Miss Neilson are as follows:—Brooklyn, the Park, October 20; Philadelphia, the Walnut, October 27, two weeks; Baltimore Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, and Lynchburg, November 10, two weeks; Columbus, Chillicothe, Cincinnati, December 1, one week; Chicago, December 8

two weeks ; St. Louis, December 29, two weeks ; Detroit, Toledo, Grand Rapids, January 12, 1880, one week ; Buffalo, Rochester, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, and Montreal, January 19, three weeks ; Boston, February 9, two weeks ; then New York and San Francisco. This is to be Miss Neilson's last tour in America.

SIGNOR ROSSI has been enthusiastically received at Rio de Janeiro. On the first night he was personally complimented on his performance of *Othello* by the Emperor.

IT is feared that M. Lassalle is about to leave the Paris Opera. The other day he arrived late for rehearsal, and M. Vauvorbeil, justly enough, required him to pay the penalty prescribed for such failures of duty. The baritone says he will go away rather than submit.

THERE is reason to believe that Mr. Chatterton will shortly be reinstated at Drury Lane.

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN has had to undergo a surgical operation in Paris. He is now in Germany, and will return before long for the Promenade Concerts.

IT is not improbable that Miss Geneviève Ward will appear at the Comédie Française on trial. Her French is all but perfect.

M. LECOCQ is very ill.

As You Like It will be played at Manchester in October for the benefit of the widow and family of the late Mr. Charles Calvert. The cast comprises Mrs. Theodore Martin as Rosalind, Miss Kate Pattison as Celia, Mr. Tom Taylor as Adam, the Hon. Lewis Wingfield as Orlando, Mr. F. C. Burnand as Touchstone, and Mr. Alma Tadema and Mr. Lindley Sambourne as Le Beau and Charles the Wrestler.

MADAME ILMA DI MURSKA, now in London, has been engaged by Mr. Mapleson for the autumn and winter.

IT is not improbable that the Théâtre Cluny will shortly be subsidized by the French Government as a means of bringing out good pieces by untried authors. Thirty deputies of the Assembly, including M. Louis Blanck, are in favour of the idea.

MR. SOTHERN is about to appear at the Park Theatre, New York, in *Crutch and Toothpick*.

ON the night of the re-opening of the Théâtre Français, M. Perrin presented M. Mazerolles to the President of the Republic, who was present in a box, and who gave the painter the rosette of an officer of the Legion of Honour.

M. CLARÉTIE's *Mirabeau* is in rehearsal at the Théâtre des Nations. Apropos of this, the London *Figaro* says that a piece called *La Jeunesse de Mirabeau* was played at the Vaudeville on the Place de la Bourse some years ago. M. Febvre, now of the Comédie Française, played Mirabeau, and made up his face in a remarkable manner after David's portrait, faithfully reproducing the small-pox marks. M. Febvre obtained the full value of his effect by entering from the slips backwards, conversing with someone behind the scenes, and then turning suddenly and facing the audience.

M. MOUNET-SULLY often has to play the lover to Madlle. Bernhardt on the stage, but in his heart he detests her. He altogether fails to understand how it is that she evokes more applause than anybody else. This ill-will is often manifested in jokes as to her thinness. "If she keeps a skeleton in her room," he said the other day, "it must be to try her dresses on."

MADILLE. BERNHARDT, however, has the good sense to turn such laughs against herself. In the little book describing her voyage in the air, it will be remem-

bered, she said that when she got into the balloon it seemed as though they had thrown *out* ballast. We now learn from a contemporary that, driving up one day to the Gaiety, she was met by Mr. Mayer, who remarked that she carried a stick in her hand. "What!" he exclaimed, "you come here in a carriage, and yet carry a stick! I hope you are not lame?" "No," was Mademoiselle's prompt reply; "I have brought it because it does better than a veil—to hide myself behind!"

THE death is announced of M. Alphonse Thys, who with Adolphe Adam invented the operetta. Born at Paris in 1807, he received his musical education at the National Conservatoire, and in 1833 gained the Grand Prix de Rome. He wrote many songs and pianoforte pieces, and afterwards began to write for the theatres. He founded, in conjunction with M. Bourget, the "Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs, et Editeurs de Musique," of which he was for several years the president.

THE other night, as a burlesque was being played at a well-known theatre, the somewhat unfeminine costumes of the actresses ruffled the susceptibilities of a prim young lady in the stalls. "Dear me," she ejaculated, "how dreadful it must be to show one's-self in that way to so many people—at one time."

SOME of our New York contemporaries have waxed facetious at the expense of Mr. Sothern's chief guest at the Natashquan river. They insist that he is not the Duke of Beaufort after all, and has been passed off as such merely as an advertisement or practical joke. If they are wrong in their surmise, they add, the Duke would do well to send home for his official robes and have his portrait taken in them. In that case all doubt as to his identity would be set at rest.

THIS fishing-party, by the way, was lately joined by the Marquis of Lorne.

MME. PASCA has retired from the world, though not actually taken the veil. She has joined in Russia an association of women who are not really nuns, but who reside in a sort of secular convent and devote themselves to good works, tending the sick and instructing children. She purposed ending her life, which was brilliant in its artistic association, in the practice of charitable deeds and religious observances.

MR. READE has presented Mr. Warner with a silver cup of antique design, bearing this inscription: "To Charles Warner. In memory of his Tom Robinson and Jean Coupeau, and of how I profited by his humour, his tenderness, his passion, and that great art of keeping the stage alive and the audience fixed, in which he yields to no living actor, this loving cup is presented by Charles Reade. July, 1879." Mr. Reade has made a present of a similar kind to Miss Fanny Leslie.

IN a letter to a Dublin journal, an Irishman expresses the hope that Mr. Irving will not bring out any drama on his story of Robert Emmet. "The sacredness of the subject," he says, "should protect it from such profanation!" The only fear we have is that after the production of the play we shall all become "United Irishmen" ourselves.

IN a *feuilleton* in *Le Voltaire* M. Zola tells the world what he thinks of English dramas and novels. He tolerates Shakspere and Ben Jonson, but is severe on Dickens, and says he has read fifty English novels produced by our best writers within the last few years, and that the poorest French *feuilletonist* does infinitely better.

"DON'T give it to him, you wretches!" exclaimed a very stout old lady in the pit at the Princess's Theatre a few evenings ago, when, in the wine-shop scene of *L'Assommoir*, Coupeau was tempted to drink again.

"THE —— company," says a paper established in the far-West, "has come and gone. The red-letter day has faded into the misty shades of the past. The

expectation has run its little day, and died the death of all human hopes and joys. The pleasure cup has been drained, and the bowl of happiness has been quaffed, and again the clothes of every-day life are donned."

THE annual dinner of the Green Room Club was held at the Zoological Gardens on the 30th July. Mr. Irving took the chair, and in proposing the chief toast said that some of his most pleasant evenings had been spent in the "room" at the western corner of Adelphi Terrace. Mr. Toole would have been present but for a "nasty touch of gout." The arrangements for the dinner were made by Mr. Ferrand, and were in all respects excellent.

GRAY, who attempted to assassinate Mr. Edwin Booth, has been sent to a lunatic asylum at Elgin, Ill. He labours under the delusion that he is the "Melancholy Dane," and was mimicked by Mr. Booth in tone and gesture at McVicker's theatre.

A WEEK or two since the coffin containing Schumann's remains was opened at Bonn, in presence of the Schumann Festival Committee, and the remains were transferred to another coffin. A cast was taken of the head, which was in a tolerable state of preservation, and to which a small quantity of hair still adhered.

M. VAUCORBEIL announces Weber's masterpiece as *Freischütz*, instead of *Freyschütz*. In the original score we find it *Der Freyschütz*, according to the ancient legend.

MR. EDGAR BRUCE will succeed Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The *Bourgeois de Pontarcy* will be produced there on the 27th inst.

MR. TOOLE is about to take the Folly Theatre.

MR. WILLS is writing for the Adelphi a drama in which Mr. Fernandez and Mr. J. G. Taylor will appear.

MR. J. S. CLARKE will shortly leave for Philadelphia.

MISS KATE PHILLIPS joins Mr. Hare and Mr. Kendal at the St. James's.

MR. HERSEE is preparing an English version of Verdi's *Aïda*.

MR. HOWE'S connection with the Haymarket, which has extended over a period of forty years without intermission, is at an end. He has joined the Vaudeville company.

MISS CAMILLE DUBOIS (the Hon. Mrs. Wyndham Stanhope) has temporarily taken the place of Miss St. John in *Madame Favart*.

MISS MYRA HOLME, Mr. J. H. Barnes, Mr. John Chester, and the eldest son of the late Mr. Charles Calvert have been engaged by Mr. Irving for the Lyceum. Mr. Barnes will probably play Aufidius in *Coriolanus*.

THE *Two Roses* is to be revived at the Vaudeville, with Mr. James as Jenkins, and Mr. Howe as Digby Grant.

At the end of the present month Mr. Prout will become the musical critic of the *Athenæum*.

MISS MUNROE will shortly appear at the Globe as Serpolette.

MR. CARTON has joined the Royalty company.

THE Duke's Theatre reopens on September 6 with *New Babylon*.

MR. SIMS REEVES, with the English Opera Company under Mr. Pyatt, commence their tour at the Prince's, Manchester, on the 4th September. Four nights a week a new and original operetta, called a *Gay Cavalier*, specially written and composed by Messrs. Ernest Cuthbert and Arthur W. Nicholson, will be played. The period of the play is that of the Civil War after Naseby.

A NEW play, written by Mr. Wills for Mr. Charles Dillon, will be produced

in November at Manchester and Liverpool. It deals with incidents connected with the Mexican revolution, but has a domestic interest.

Rothomago is being adapted by Mr. Farnie for the Alhambra, where it will be produced at Christmas.

BEFORE Miss Kellogg left America for England she was presented by a hundred ladies of New York with a pretty diamond ornament for the hair.

A DRAMATIC RECITAL was given at Buxton on the 15th in aid of Burbage Church by Miss Emily Faithfull, Miss Kate Pattison and Mr. Brandon Thomas. Miss Faithfull received a hearty encore for "The Death of the old Squire," one of Charlotte Cushman's best recitations.

MR. WARREN WRIGHT left England on the 19th August for New York, to conduct Miss Heller's entertainment.

M. GOUNOD'S *Tribut de Zamora* is in preparation at the Paris Opera.

M. VAUCORBEIL intends to give French composers 7 instead of 6 per cent. the gross receipts for the first year, and 8 instead of $6\frac{1}{2}$ for the following years.

THE Renaissance reopens with *La Petite Mademoiselle* and *Le Petit Duc*.

NEXT winter *Les Noces de Figaro* will be revived at the Paris Opéra Comique.

M. OKOLOWITZ has written for the Théâtre des Arts a piece called *Le Père d'Adam*. Its title excites a good deal of curiosity.

A ONCE-FAMOUS OPERA-SINGER in Paris, M. Claude Marié, the father of Mdlle. Paole Marié, and Mdlle. Sophie Grimm, the original Rafaëla in Auber's *Haidée*, have just died.

Paques Fleuries, by MM. Clairville, Delacour, and Lacome, is in rehearsal at the Folies Dramatiques, which has re-opened with *Madame Favart*.

Les Petits Coucous, by MM. Adolphe Belot and Eugène Nus, will be produced at the Palais Royal this month, with M. Geoffroy in the chief part.

MADAME TREBELLI and Herr Behrens, the *Musical World* says, are again about to make a tour in Scandinavia.

MR. BOUCICAULT'S new drama, in which Miss Coghlan and Mr. John Clayton will appear, the latter as a railway engineer, was put in rehearsal at Booth's Theatre on the 10th August.

MR. J. T. FORD has signed an agreement by which he and Mr. Zimmerman secure the control of the Fifth Avenue Theatre for a portion of next season. They will produce English operas, including the new opera by Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan. The French opera season at the same house will be controlled by M. Grau, and the Italian by M. Strakosch.

MISS ROSE WOOD, the actress, has purchased the farm now occupied by Ira B. Watrous, in Dorchester county, near Federalsburg, Md.

L'Assommoir has been produced at San Francisco, with Mr. James O'Neill as Coupeau, and Miss Rose Coghlan as Gervaise.

MADAME ROSE HERSEE goes from triumph to triumph in Melbourne. The *Argus*, speaking of her Carmen, says: "She brings to the representation of this very exacting rôle the enthusiasm of a warm and sympathetic disposition, the pride which an artist takes in congenial work to be done, the experience gained in the best of schools, and those natural gifts of voice and graces of manner which are her strong and individual characteristics. It is, perhaps, possible to realize more of the evil aspect of the character, but certainly impossible to present it under an aspect more piquant, characteristic, and alluring."

MDLLE. BUSKA, of the Imperial Theatre at Vienna, is now in Paris, and may be seen at the Français whenever Mdlle. Bernhardt appears.

The Theatre.

OCTOBER 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

THE CHURCH AND THE STAGE.



CURIOUS but not perhaps altogether unnatural reaction of feeling is just now making itself felt with regard to the recent visit to London of the Comédie Française. It seems but yesterday that these famous artists, as well as their art, were received with open arms, without a note of hesitation in the welcome accorded to them and with an appreciation which was even more generous than it was discriminating. That M. Got and his companions would be warmly welcomed by those

who had already become familiar with their artistic merit, as displayed on the only stage where they had hitherto acted together, was of course only to be expected. Such a season as would be offered by no consecutive six weeks at the Théâtre Français was presented to us at one of our own theatres, and the chance was obviously one not to be let slip by the lover of fine acting and French plays. The French stage has, moreover, of late years been persistently written up by a school of cultivated English critics; judiciously or injudiciously, its excellence has been constantly urged, and not seldom its superiority to our own has been insisted upon, both in general argument and in detailed comparison. Thus in one way or another the curiosity of intelligent playgoers was fairly aroused, and the success of the undertaking was to a great extent assured from the first. More than this, however, was needed in order to secure such a triumph as that in which Mr. Hollingshead's experiment resulted; and this further agency was supplied by the action of fashion in ordaining that society should night after night betake itself to the Gaiety, whether it understood French or not, whether or not it knew one player from another, and whether it was or was not able to keep awake during the four or five acts presented to it upon the

stage. And society was not content to stop here. It was anxious to lionise the individual actors and actresses, more particularly the latter. It would pay heavy sums to attract to its drawing-rooms special entertainments by the popular players; it insisted upon personal introductions, upon public patronage of its *protégés*, and, in fact, upon making itself ridiculous, according to its wont, over its new toy. So, for a time, no words were too friendly for the celebrated foreign company, for the individuals composing it, as well as for the ensemble of art which is its outcome.

Now comes the reaction, and it naturally springs from a quarter where the stage finds even less sympathy and comprehension than in the fashionable world. The Church steps forward to rebuke—what? The excesses of society in its pursuit of its favourite “lions?” The mistakes made when a wholesale change of front is attempted? No: the attack is upon the stage itself, and the reasons given are the vicious tendency of certain individual French plays and the immorality of certain individual French players. The future of our stage is despaired of because the recent performances at the Gaiety so completely took the fancy of a small section of the public; the degradation of the drama is deduced from the looseness of the life led by some of its fashionable interpreters. Thus we were treated to a tirade against certain proceedings at the Albert Hall Fancy Fair in which various personages more or less distinguished took part; proceedings which were doubtless ill-judged, but have no more to do with the drama than had the flat, yellow bonnet worn on this occasion by one of the fair stall-keepers. Then we learned from contributors to *soi-disant* religious organs that the *répertoire* of plays was too terrible to contemplate. The hands of these worthy scribes were held up in horror over the title of a drama which they evidently did not understand; and it was concluded that any work with such a name as *Le Demi-monde* or *Le Fils Naturel* must of necessity be abnormally vicious and injurious, not only to girls and boys, but to men and women. We were indeed told in so many words that the season of French plays at the Gaiety throws us back “on the unpalatable reflection that the people love to have it so, and that they have been so thoroughly educated in these vicious tastes, and so blinded to the inevitable result of such performances, that men no longer feel the shame they would formerly have experienced if not merely propriety but purity and morality had been outraged in the presence of their wives and daughters.”

These are, in truth, harsh words, but they are only typical of much of the abuse which has of late been directed from church to stage. Not content with its own vocabulary of denunciation, one of these imputers of evil has recourse to extracts from the prurient essays on the corruption of the world at large which form favourite *morceaux* in some of the sensational society-journals. Bishops and other dignitaries who are suspected of a sneaking belief in the beneficial influence of the stage, and in the possibility of finding earnest Christians amongst stage-players, are handled very roughly indeed, and they must be left to find their consolation in the fact that their ill-treatment is shared by the Prince and Princess of Wales, whose crimes are their frequent visits, not only to the theatres, but to churches of a school different from that of their critics.

Intemperate condemnation of this wholesale and ignorant order may of course be safely left to provide its own answer. Its reckless exaggeration is not likely to deceive any thinking man ; and even those who are prejudiced against the theatre may well be shocked at seeing to what lengths prejudice worse than theirs is capable of going. To any suggestions tending towards the purification of the stage and towards increasing its capabilities for moral teaching true lovers of the acted drama will always be ready, nay, anxious, to give all due attention, even though they may not be willing to admit that the primary object of art either on the stage or elsewhere is identical with that of the Sunday-school. But when, in place of any such rational albeit occasionally narrow-minded pleading, we have violent abuse of the theatre and all connected with it, and when any miserable peg is considered strong enough to sustain an attack upon playwrights, players, and playgoers, the virulence defeats its own object. Blatant nonsense of this kind can be written only by those who do not know what the theatre really is, and are therefore not competent to pronounce an opinion as to its influence, or who are untrustworthy, because they wilfully misrepresent what they see. They altogether overshoot the mark, and the large majority which disagrees with them can well afford to smile at a series of onslaughts so abortive. When, however, we find those who profess themselves friends of the stage, and who have often before set from the pulpit the example of large-hearted toleration and of sympathy with all that is best upon the stage, when we see these recently-won allies turning half-hearted, and threatening to rejoin the ranks of the enemy, we can scarcely look on with philosophical indifference. We can only strive to remove the latest scare—the evil moral effects of the success of the Comédie Française at the Gaiety—by pointing out the fallacy which underlies and animates it. Let it then be pointed out, once for all, that most of the plays given at the Gaiety would have shocked none of us had they been literally translated ; that the productions which were the hits of the season were perfectly innocent in character ; that the most objectionable pieces included in the *répertoire* made the least mark of any kind. So far from the extreme popularity of these performances indicating any tendency either moral or immoral on the part of the public, or proving the love of the modern playgoer for prurient plays, it simply illustrated the readiness with which fashionable society follows its leaders like a flock of sheep. The newly-arrived players had *prestige* ; one amongst them had secured a reputation such as falls to the lot of few actors and actresses in a generation. So they were run after, were cheered, were *fêted*, and were wondered at by people who sometimes gave five guineas for a single stall and fifteen for a box. But all this had nothing to do with any expected impropriety in the plays performed. Fashion would for the time have encouraged them whatever they chose to play ; indeed, it made the most fuss over them on an occasion when they were playing nothing at all. Let them come to us again, and very possibly they would pass almost unnoticed, as did Signor Salvini, who, on his second visit here, performed to an empty house, and abruptly closed in despair the season which followed his original triumph. That we should have to urge in reply to the timid strictures of doubtful friends considerations so obvious as this may be regretted, but it

cannot well be avoided. Those who take alarm unnecessarily often have to be reassured by arguments which would have little weight with the more robust.

MR. READE ON RUDE LETTER-WRITING.

THERE is undoubtedly plenty of scope for the satirist of modern manners who chooses to take up the subject of newspaper-controversy. People who, in season and out of season, abroad and at home, are perpetually writing to *The Times*, have for a long time been laughed at for their pains ; and if a change does not speedily come over the tone of those who sling ink at one another through the medium of theatrical journals, the whole practice of personal communication with the Press will presently be brought into disrepute. Of course, the great weapon against an abuse of this description is ridicule. It is of no use to reason with a man who *ex hypothesi* mistakes abuse for argument. The best thing to do is to turn the laugh against him, and hold him up to contempt ; and perhaps the surest means of accomplishing this desirable object is provided by caricature.

We are therefore unfeignedly glad to see that the caricaturist has arisen in the person of a popular author who has often before this devoted his energies and his great abilities to a successful attack upon crying evils. Our only doubt is whether the bludgeon wielded by Mr. Charles Reade, for it is he who has set himself the task of chaffing the controversialists, is not a little too heavy, whether he is not crushing an obnoxious insect with a Nasmyth steam-hammer. But it would be ungenerous and ungrateful to look a gift-horse such as this in the mouth, and we may well be content to thank the great novelist for having struck this blow, without pausing to inquire whether he has not struck it needlessly hard. The system, then, which Mr. Reade has adopted involves a sacrifice of self which we cannot appreciate too highly, for, in pretending to write a very angry letter on his own account, he pretends so well that he runs the risk of being thought by careless or ignorant readers to be really in a violent temper. It is, however, a common penalty of greatness to be misunderstood, especially when its greatness takes the form of philanthropic effort ; and Mr. Reade may rest satisfied that time, which works wonders, will make clear, even to the most dense, his motive and his meaning.

The way in which he sets to work is characteristically straightforward. Having doubtless observed the bitter bickerings which have recently gone on between inferior dramatic authors and those who chance to annoy them, and having also perceived that such a correspondence as that between Mr. Paul Merritt and "Sammy the Boy in the Pit," is undignified and unworthy, he gives himself to a parody, almost brutal in its cynicism, of this sort of letter-writing. So, in "self-defence" against an attack for which he obviously cannot care one jot, he bursts out into the following delightful skit, numbering his sentences to indicate the several forms of abusive newspaper-correspondence at which he aimed his shafts or ridicule. After

a deliciously inconsequent touch in his remark, "my business is not open to reckless conjectures and insolent sneers as my art is," he proceeds:—

"1. An anonymous letter-writer, whether lie sends it to a gentleman by the post or points it at a gentleman in a journal, is one and the same criminal at bottom. He is a caitiff who hits and hides. This unpunished criminal is the worst disgrace of literature; his efforts and his conduct are the main cause of its low condition in England. More civilized nations have suppressed this criminal by law. 2. Charles Reade and his peers are the glory of letters, and the men who keep the literary character from falling into universal contempt. 3. When an anonymous letter-writer attacks a Charles Reade in his business, it is as if Newgate were to pass strictures on the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. 4. Every word this anonymous letter-writer has written is either a falsehood, an equivocation, or a fallacy. His very signature is a lie. He is not a French Boy, but an English skunk. France would not own him."

Of these four thrusts, perhaps the last is the most telling; but much is to be said in favour of the downright simple force of the second. "Charles Reade and his peers are the glory of letters" is a hit somewhat lacking possibly in subtlety; but with what admirable precision it strikes the overweening vanity of some of these angry authors. It has a ring about it that one cannot forget, and one has no fear of its being by any chance misunderstood. No. 1 misses, we think, the true satirical vein; it is too serious an onslaught upon an undoubted evil, and is like commencing a chapter of Swift with a page from Dr. Johnson. But the bold simile in No. 3, in which the comparison of the anonymous scribe with a convicted felon is amplified by the juxtaposition of the dramatist and the Lord Chief Justice, is in its way perfect, and leads in the happiest way up to the piled-on agony of the epithets and assertions in No. 4. It really seems impossible that the writers of abusive epistles to the papers should fail to benefit from thus seeing themselves as others see them.

Later on in the course of this elaborate joke, which, if space permitted, we would gladly quote at length as a curiosity of the day, we come across bits of exquisite parody. Thus, the writer, alluding perhaps to the "I scorn to tell a lie" of Moses in *The School for Scandal*, quietly observes, "What I say is always the exact truth, no matter where I say it." As might, indeed, be expected of "the glory of letters." But enough of this vigorous epistle has been given to indicate where lie at once the strength and the weakness of this attack upon a crying evil. The former is found where Mr. Reade's power never fails him, in his command of nervous language, his thoroughness and his unflinching boldness. The danger, alike for him and for the object which he has in view, lies in the possibility, nay, the probability, of his being in some quarters, at any rate, misunderstood. Some there may be found seriously to believe that an author of Mr. Reade's eminence writes of himself in all good faith as "the glory of letters," and calls those who differ from him in opinion "caitiffs," "jail-birds," and "skunks." These may even take heart at finding, or thinking they find, so eminent an authority for their own literary habits, and may at a humble distance, follow Mr. Reade along the road which he indicates only as a route to be shunned. On the whole, however,

the piece of well-merited ridicule can only have a salutary effect, and it is, at all events, something to know that Mr. Reade is sensible of the degradation to art and letters of this species of Billingsgate, and raises, even in the midst of domestic affliction, his powerful voice against the growing abuse.

M. TURQUET AND THE FRENCH DRAMA.

HISTORY again repeats itself. Republican governments have generally re-established or strengthened the censure, and the present French Ministry are unmistakably prepared to follow the time-honoured example thus set before them. About a year ago, it may be remembered, M. Bardoux, the Minister of Public Instruction, addressed a letter to the managers of Parisian theatres as to the "sensible abasement observable in certain manifestations of the dramatic and lyrical arts." This abasement, he not very obscurely hinted, might be due to the freedom extended to the stage by the decree of 1854, and as the evil was undeniable he thought it his duty to discover a remedy. M. Bardoux was soon afterwards prevented by circumstances over which he had no control from accomplishing this object, but the new Under-Secretary of State for the Fine Arts, M. Edmond Turquet, would seem to have espoused the cause of theatrical reform with at least equal zeal. "The Republic," he says in a circular to the inspectors of theatres, "has much to do for the stage, and it is right to indicate what co-operation I desire in the so-necessary work of regeneration which we undertake. If the dramatic art is declining, it is because France, kept in leading-strings, saw for too many years her political liberties suppressed. In the theatre noble and manly works were under suspicion. That which spoke to man of his dignity, liberty, and high duties was proscribed. A corrupting art took possession of the stage; license boldly displayed itself there. Art seemed no longer to have any object than to amuse, and to amuse it stooped even to corruption. We wish the dramatic art to be restored to a more manly and a prouder ideal; the theatre to be a school. The art we want is that which elevates, not that which degrades; the work which we like is that which purifies, not that which corrupts. The powerful influence of the theatre must come to our aid and second the efforts we are making to educate the people, to strengthen them, to make them more and more fitted for exercising the power placed in their hands by the Republic, so as to give France the moral greatness which is becoming to a democracy. For this purpose let us as a policy give all the liberty compatible with the maintenance of the public peace, and reserve all our severity for licentious verses and immoral plays, remembering that the two principles of the Republic are dignity and liberty." All this sounds very well; but it unfortunately remains to be seen whether M. Turquet's zeal for the purity of the drama is sincere,—whether, in other words, he is not acting in the guise of a stage-reformer to keep from the public ear any lines inimical to Republicanism and the Ministry to which he belongs. Those who are versed

in the history of France since the great Revolution may be pardoned for being rather sceptical as to the disinterestedness of his motives.

In two respects M. Turquet entirely appears to overstate his case, if not to be in error. In the first place, as M. Sarcey often points out, French dramatic art is not on the decline. Many of the plays brought out in Paris since the Restoration are superior to those of the eighteenth century, and are not far behind the finest products of the age of Louis Quatorze. During the last twenty years, no doubt, the number of important plays and *débuts* has not been so great as of yore, but on going through a history of the French stage we shall find periods of far greater sterility. In those periods, as may be the case now, the earth was resting in preparation for a new and bountiful harvest. Many French dramatists of the present time may be said to live upon the ideas of their immediate predecessors ; on the other hand, there are men writing for the stage who, like M. Sardou, may expect to have their work applauded for many years to come. The truth seems to be that what M. Turquet calls " decadence " is nothing more than a temporary suspension of activity. Nor is dramatic excellence dependent in any way upon the existence of political liberty. Indeed, it might be plausibly urged that art makes better progress under a despotism than a democracy. Molière's *Tartuffe* might not have seen the light except under an absolute monarchy. The *Mariage de Figaro* would not have been produced in a Republican state. The political pamphlets of M. Augier would not have been published in a theatre if, as it has been expressed, " un souverain maître de toutes les contradictions ne les eût imposées aux scruples des gens en sous ordre." The point, however, should not be insisted upon very far, as general ideas are alternately borne out and shown to be inapplicable. M. Turquet seems to be of opinion that dramatic genius can be not only fostered but created by State encouragement ; but in this, as in his view that the theatre should be employed as a school, he is undoubtedly mistaken.

The Under-Secretary is on more tenable ground when he speaks of the prevailing immorality of the French drama. That immorality is of comparatively recent origin, but has already become an evil of no ordinary magnitude. The great majority of the plays brought out in Paris from the days of the Fronde down to the Restoration were remarkably free from offence. Instead of appealing to prurient tastes they depended almost exclusively upon an interesting story, wedded to noble poetry or humorous situations and character. If, like the finest of Shakspere's tragedies, they contained anything of a nature to ruffle nineteenth century susceptibilities, it was a matter of detail rather than of principle, and could accordingly be removed without appreciable injury to the plot. In other words, such inherent indelicacy as that of Otway's *Orphan* was but seldom to be laid to the dramatist's charge. The mission of the stage may be to " catch the manners living as they rise," but it is undeniable that even in the worst days of Louis Quinze the boards of the Théâtre Français were never polluted by such scenes as those which disfigure the novels of Crcbillon fils and Laclos, and which, as the correspondence of the time will prove, may be accepted as a faithful picture of Parisian society at the time they were written. During the last forty years, however, this regard for decency has perceptibly

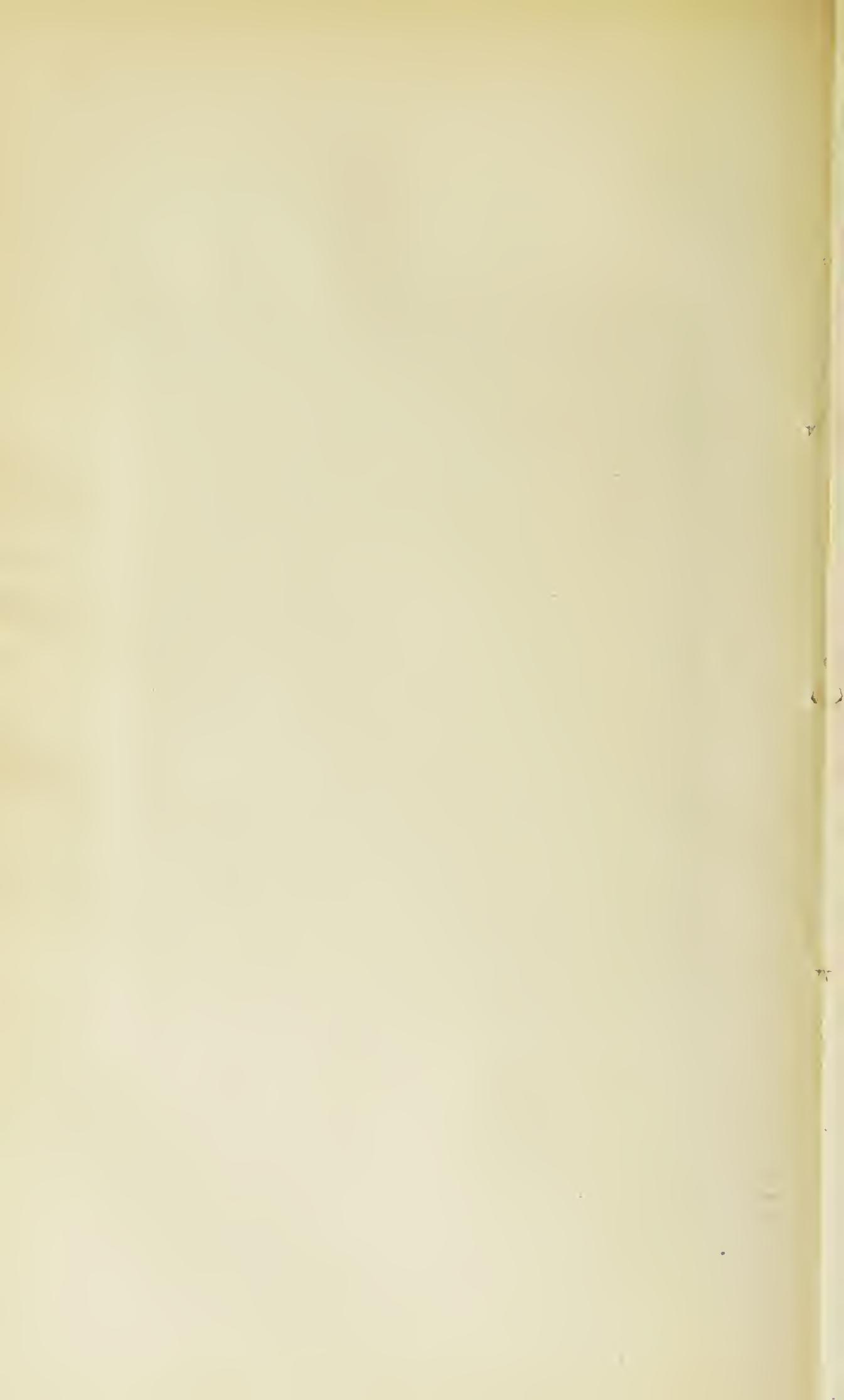
diminished. The German school of dramatic composition found many admirers in Paris; M. Dumas undertook to prove that those who are no better than they should be are generally better than they are commonly supposed to be, and before long it became the fashion to discuss the most delicate social problems in the form of a play. Nowadays, if we may judge from their practice, the theory of every French dramatist, from M. Augier down to M. Calonne, is that if a play is to succeed the story must turn upon adultery or seduction. If such a conclusion is suggested by novelties at the Comédie Française and the Odéon, as is really the case, the account we have to give of the plays brought out at secondary theatres, it may well be supposed, is still more unfavourable. *Bébé* and *Niniche*, erotic pieces both, make the fortunes of the Gymnase and the Variétés respectively, and even Etherege and Wycherly might have felt ashamed to acknowledge the authorship of what may be seen every night at the Palais Royal. "In a Parisian theatre," Mr. Charles Mathews once said, "we have no right to be surprised if the heroine of a comedy comes before us as the affianced bride of one man, the wife of another, in love with a third, and with a child by the fourth. We see milliners and lawyer's clerks living together in a most unceremonious manner, ballet-girls talking openly and unblushingly of their numerous lovers, children ignorant of their paternity." Moreover, these little irregularities, so far from being held up to reprobation, are palliated or made amusing, and the sympathies of the audience are too often enlisted on the side of vice as against virtue itself. If M. Turquet succeeds in uprooting this rampant abuse—and it is clearly in his power to do so as long as he remains in office—he will confer a substantial boon upon his country.



THE THEATRE, NO. 15, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Yours truly
Lottie Prue



Portraits.

XXIX.—MISS VENNE.

IT is not more than five years since this young actress went as a beginner in her profession to the Strand Theatre, and already she is established in popular favour as one of the brightest soubrettes on the stage. For some time after her *début*, of course, she had to play somewhat thankless characters, but as the opportunities presented to her increased in number and value it became evident that to a pleasing appearance she united considerable vivacity, humour, and judgment. These gifts were first displayed to advantage in Mr. Burnand's *Dora and Diplunacy*, perhaps the most diverting and at the same time the most tasteful parody seen in London for many years. Miss Venne, who represented the Countess Zicka, exactly caught the spirit in which the piece had been written. Her imitation of Mrs. Bancroft's acting in the part of that wicked adventuress was in all respects irreproachable. The style, the deportment, and the mannerisms of the older actress were reproduced by many delicate touches. The folding of the arms, the abrupt rising from the chair, the peculiar walk across the stage,—all this was perfect caricature. Those who had seen *Diplomacy* played at the Prince of Wales's Theatre would not have thought that Mrs. Bancroft's Zicka afforded much room for such treatment, and the theatrical capital made out of the performance by Miss Venne indicated close observation and a rare capacity for the highest description of burlesque. The advantage gained by the young actress in *Diplunacy* was more than confirmed when, in the beginning of the present year, she appeared as Penelope in *The Snowball*. The weight of the piece fell principally on her shoulders, and her representation of the fortunate but bewildered handmaid—bewildered between gratified rapacity and disappointed curiosity—was irresistible. In the meantime she had appeared with success in, among other pieces, *Family Ties* and the burlesque of *The Red Rover*. In the latter she gracefully burlesqued the sentimentality of the Robertsonian heroines, and nothing could have been better in its way than her singing of the song,—

In a little cottage dwelt a little timid maiden,
 Oh ! she was so timid and she was so small,
But her heart, gigantic, ne'er was overladen,
 Everyone adored her, and she loved them all.

In the following March Miss Venne passed over to the Royalty Theatre to appear in Mr. Sims's agreeable comedy *Crutch and Toothpick*, to which she imparted an additional charm, and also as a sham *ingénue* in *The Zoo*. From the Royalty she went to the Criterion, where she is now playing. Endowed with a keen sense of humour, but never deviating into extravagance, and enjoying the advantages of a good education, Miss Lottie Venne is decidedly an acquisition to the London stage, and, if she turns her talents to further account by unremitting study, will probably go far to compensate old playgoers for the loss of Mrs. Keeley.

The Round Table.

GOING ON THE STAGE.

By H. J. BYRON.

THERE is probably no calling which has changed so in its outer and minor aspects during the last twenty years or so as that of the actor. Artistically and socially his position has improved ; but, to put it in a more utilitarian fashion, *professionally* it is a question if it has done so. In *The Theatre* some months ago I wrote an article stating that I thought the public had benefited by the altered state of things theatrical. I wrote avowedly from the point of view of the spectator. I held that London and provincial playgoers, so far from having anything to complain of, were, on the contrary, to be congratulated on the *improved*, I use the term advisedly, condition of London and country theatres.

Whether the actor may look at matters in so self-contented a spirit is a question. The actor who has won his spurs, who is popular and in the full exercise of his powers, cares very little for anything theatrical that does not affect his own particular line ; he knows he is of value and in demand, and he can afford to wait, at least generally. If he plays young lovers, waiting is, of course, a word to be considered within certain limits, and with certain reservations. A *jeune premier* must not run to waste, and everybody is not a Delaunay or a Charles Mathews. An "old man" if he commences pretty early may defy Time to a certain extent; indeed, he mellows and becomes more valuable as age thins his locks and reduces the number of his teeth. It would be ungallant to touch upon the effect our friend with the scythe has upon the ladies. The days when Juliets of less than forty were considered juvenile and precocious impostors have departed. Have the very youthful Juliets taken their place ? *There's the rub* ; at least, one of them.

The particular "rub," however, to which I would direct my reader's attention is of another nature. Formerly the theatrical aspirant found but little difficulty in making a "start" in his profession. I am old enough to remember the "theatrical agencies" in full blast. Dingy and disreputable looking were the "offices" when they were not actually in public-houses. The neighbourhood of Bow Street was the favourite locality for the "agent," and Bow Street itself twenty-five years ago was as remarkable for its "professional" frequenters as for its odour of stale cabbages and its police-van. There the seedy "utility man" rubbed shoulders with the loftiest "leading gentleman," and the blue-chinned and

deep-voiced representative of truculent bandits hob-nobbed with the side-splitting expositor of the broadest farce. Here the mighty provincial manager would haughtily interview the trembling applicant for some humble post, and condescendingly unbend in the presence of the equally magniloquent metropolitan "star." The whole "mix-up" of the theatrical, vocal, equestrian, licensed-victualling and unlicensed liquoring was degrading and disgusting, and the first experience of the unpleasent conglomeration would drive many a young would-be actor back to his desk, or only too frequently led the way to a line of life which the youth thought was "professional," because it was pursued by so many whose talents and popularity he admired and envied.

Nevertheless, this state of things did afford a young man an opportunity of starting on "his wild career." Provincial managers employed the agents, and seldom gave ear to the aspirations of stage-struck youths. When the young man had paid his fee he probably obtained an engagement for the smallest "business" in a third-class country theatre, and it remained for good-conduct, ambition, luck, and opportunity to do the rest. All the country theatres maintained stock companies: the best London actors paid the principal ones frequent visits, the pieces were continually changed, and the young actor had no cause to complain of lack of practice. If he had anything in him the system of the time was calculated to bring it out. According to the present condition of theatrical affairs, the young man who wishes to adopt the stage as a calling finds his pathway at the outset a most difficult one. I was consulted on the subject a short time since, and was for the first time thoroughly alive to the difficulties of the matter. There is hardly a stock company in the country as to anything like the regular seasons at the best theatres where the profession, *as a profession*, could be studied that they do not occur. There is a season for pantomime, but that hardly counts. If a person wishes to accustom himself to the boards and to test his own fitness, playing one or two very short parts, possibly of a few lines, for a year or two with a "travelling" company can be of no use, and is only a waste of time. And provincial theatres are entirely supported by these wandering troupes nowadays; neither does there appear any probability of the system altering. London for a start is of course out of the question. There are some instances of well-dressed, good-looking young men who have had no experience whatever, strolling through unemotional characters without giving any particular offence, but from whom it is hopeless to expect anything better without larger opportunities for practice; and London audiences expect their actors to come before them "ready-made." It seems to me that amateur clubs give the theatrical neophyte their only possible chance, and the judgment of the audiences they play to are generally most unreliable and deceptive. How, then, is the young man who wishes to become an actor to learn the rudiments of his profession? In the interest of those who would adopt a calling better paid and better treated than it was, and in that of the audiences of the future, I maintain this is a subject of considerable importance. If the difficulty I have dwelt upon exists to-day, what will be its effect in the course of time? It is all very well to say "demand creates a supply," but what *sort* of a supply? With hardly an

exception the popular actors of to-day have received a provincial training, and have learnt the rudiments of their art in the country. How is a youthful actor to do so now? Such conscientious agents as Mr. Blackmore and Mr. Griffiths will do their best for him, but what can they do? Several excellent actors "give lessons," but it is not every one who has the money to pay for them, and where is the youth to go when pronounced "fit for harness?" There is no national school for actors as there ought to be; and, meanwhile, I for one am puzzled as to how the would-be actors of the future are to find the opportunity of studying their attractive but difficult profession.

A NOTE ON FECHTER.

By DUTTON COOK.

I FIRST saw the late Charles Fechter in Paris a long time since, when Prince Louis Bonaparte presided over the second French Republic and the barrel-organs were still busy grinding out "Mourir pour la Patrie;" when the charming Rose Chérie was the accepted heroine of sentimental comedy, and the incomparable Rachel Felix was the absolute tragedy-queen of the Théâtre Français; when Lamartine's *Toussaint L'Ouverture* was in course of representation at the Porte St. Martin, much lamp-black being consumed by the personators of the natives of St. Domingo, and Mélingue was strutting and fretting in the portentous play of *Urbain Grandier* at Alexander Dumas's Théâtre Historique; when Auriol was a famous clown and Gavarni the most admired of caricaturists, and when a good many of us were "young and curly" who are now old, and gray or bald, as the case may be. Charles Fechter was rather to be remarked for his good looks than his good acting in those days. He played at the Ambigu Comique parts not very taxing to the intellect, such as Phœbus, in an elaborate acting-edition of *Notre Dame*, and Amaury in a long melodrama *Les Quatre Fils Aymon*, familiar to some Englishmen as the theme of one of Balfe's operas. The young player was much slimmer of figure than he became in later times, his handsome face, it had always an English look to my thinking, was less fleshy, his manner was very bright and gay, with an air of romance and picturesqueness about it peculiar to the man. But he did not impress the public very deeply. It was not, I think, until 1852, when he appeared as Armand Duval in *La Dame aux Camélias*, to the Marguerite Gautier of Madame Doehe, that his merits were fairly asserted or recognised. The facts of his theatrical career subsequently have been often recited, and are well-known. He became famous as the best stage-lover of his time.

It enhanced that he was born in England, but English was to him always a foreign language, and the fact of his success upon our stage has hardly received its meed of applause. Charles Mathews won much admiration by his performance of two characters in French before a Parisian audience, but the effort was quite of an exotic sort; it stirred curiosity and amused, and there was an end of it. No one knew better than Mathews himself

that there was no abiding-place for him upon French boards ; he was there merely as a visitor liable at any moment to discover that he was outstaying his welcome. But Charles Fechter firmly established himself in England ; he remained here for nearly ten years, he performed a long list of characters, he became a London manager, he played in Shakspere and took high rank among our best players ; the English public greatly admired him, and but for his ambition to extend his fame and the favour awarded him in America it is probable that he would have remained among us a leading, esteemed, and prosperous actor to the last. It is true that he always spoke English with a strong foreign accent, and that he was never able to deliver English blank-verse with due regard to its rhythmical properties. He reduced it to plain prose ; and these were grave defects. But with every actor appearing in the poetic or heroic drama there is always something the audience have to "get over," to grow accustomed to, to become reconciled with and to forget. It may be defect of face or of figure, tricks of manner, faults of gesture and deportment. In Fechter's case, his accent, the havoc he made of the blank-verse, and a certain "throaty" quality of voice had to be forgiven him; in later years, too, the size of his waist had to be overlooked. But discount having been allowed in these respects, Fechter's acting was full of charm. There was a French redundancy of gesture, no doubt, and he had a way of looking not immediately towards the person he addressed, but at some imagined point, a yard, perhaps, above their heads. Presumably he thought his fine eyes were thus seen to the best advantage. But he suited the action to the word with singular appropriateness, he was very graceful of movement, he never relaxed his grasp of the character he represented, he was refined, fervent, pathetic, passionate. He appeared with success in what are called "coat-and-waistcoat" plays ; but he was best pleased, I think, to figure in dramas permitting an exhibition of his taste and skill in costume. He liked a romantic story with a chivalrous hero attired in a picturesque dress. Of course he was more effective in some parts than in others ; certain of Lemaître's characters suited him very indifferently, and his Othello won little approval ; but his success was great as Ruy Blas, as Henri de Lagardère, as Claude Melnotte, Obenreizer, Edgar of Ravenswood, and as Hamlet. His term of management commenced most happily with *The Duke's Motto*, and he thrived greatly for some seasons ; but he was not well-advised in his choice of new productions. *Bel Demonio*, *The King's Butterfly*, and *The Watch-Cry* were but poor plays.

He was very inventive in the matter of stage-business, and desirous always of substituting new business for old. He professed that it had been to him an unceasing labour of love for twenty years to reform the scenic representation of Shakspere. He denounced "tradition" as a "worm-eaten and unwholesome prison where dramatic art languishes in fetters," forgetting that it is the great players who legislate for the stage in this regard and hand it down its traditions. Did he not look forward to his own innovations becoming in time traditions ? Fechter's Hamlet will long be reckoned by playgoers among the best Hamlets they have ever known. I have seen perhaps a score of Hamlets, including the Hamlets of Macready, of Charles Kean, of Emil Devrient, and Salvini ; it seems to me that Fechter's Hamlet ranks

with the worthiest of these. He had special physical qualifications ; his manner was natural and charming, as Mr. George H. Lewes wrote at the time : "Fechter is lymphatic, delicate, handsome, and with his long flaxen curls, quivering, sensitive nostrils, fine eye, and sympathetic voice, perfectly represents the graceful Prince. His aspect and bearing are such that the eye rests on him with delight ; our sympathies are completely secured," &c. It must be remembered, however, that failure in the part of Hamlet has been of rare occurrence ; and that applause has been carried off by Hamlets of but meagre histrionic capacity. Macready pronounced as the result of his experience that "no actor possessed of moderate advantages of person, occasional animation, and some knowledge of stage-business can entirely fail in the part of Hamlet ; the interest of the story, and the rapid succession of startling situations growing out of it, compel the attention of the spectator and irresistibly engage his sympathy." The success of Fechter in Hamlet really owed little to his innovations, his neglect of traditions ; although a certain amused curiosity prevailed for awhile concerning the new French Hamlet who wore a flaxen wig. I will not venture to discuss at length his new views and readings, his new stage-business, but these have been fully placed upon record. It was the firm belief of Fechter's Hamlet, in defiance of general opinion to the contrary, that Queen Gertrude was Claudius's accomplice in the murder of her husband. In the time of Fechter's Hamlet it was the fashion in Denmark to wear a medallion portrait, swinging from a gold chain, round the neck. Fechter's Hamlet wore thus a portrait of his father ; the Queen wore a portrait of Claudius ; Guildenstern was similarly adorned. Usually there is not a pin to choose between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ; the unfortunate gentlemen are alike odious to Hamlet, and they are slaughtered off the stage, at the instigation of that prince, after they have been well murdered in the presence of the house by their histrionic representatives. But to Fechter's Hamlet Rosencrantz was less hateful than Guildenstern : Rosencrantz wore no portrait round his neck. When Fechter's Hamlet spoke his first speech, and compared the late king to Hyperion, and Claudius to a satyr, he produced and gazed fondly at his father's picture ; when he mentioned his uncle's "picture in little" he illustrated his meaning by handling the medallion worn by Guildenstern ; in the closet scene he places his miniature of his father side by side with his mother's miniature of Claudius ; when at the close of their interview Gertrude outstretched her arm, and would embrace her son, he held up sternly the portrait of his father ; the wretched woman recoiled and staggered from the stage ; Hamlet reverentially kissed the picture as he murmured, "I must be cruel," &c. In the play-scene Fechter's Hamlet, when he rose at the discomfiture of Claudius, tore the leaves from the play-book and flung them in the air ; in the scene with Ophelia, Fechter's Hamlet did not perceive that the King was watching him ; had he known that he would have been so convinced of his uncle's guilt that the play would have been unnecessary. In the fourth act, if Fechter's Hamlet had not been well-guarded he would have killed the King then and there. In the last scene a gallery ran at the back of the stage with short flights of stairs on either side ; all exits and entrances were made by means of these stairs. Upon the confession

of Laertes, the King endeavoured to escape up the right-hand staircase; Hamlet, perceiving this, rushed up the left-hand stairs, and encountering Claudius in the centre of the gallery, there despatched him.

A BED OF THORNS.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

A MOST able and amusing paper, which lately appeared in *The Theatre*, entitled "A Bed of Roses," gave a very good idea of the troubles, annoyances, mortifications, and distresses to which a poor dramatic author might be subjected in his dealings with theatrical managers for the production of a play. Far from exaggerating the painful and awkward position in which the harassed author (even when not overburdened with an excess of susceptibility) may be placed, the writer of the article has understated the tortures to which a dramatist may be exposed by a management devoid of all consideration for him, utterly wanting in the manner which ought to guide the relations of persons of education and standing, and as ignorant of the first elements of truth as of refinement or of self-control. Perhaps the obvious *bonhomie* of the writer's nature restrained his pen ; or, rather, let it be hoped that his career as a dramatic author has never led him into such an abyss of contumely, insolence, utter disregard of all truthful straightforwardness, and gross injustice as that into which other authors may have been plunged. There may be those who, unfortunately, have had but too truthful cause in their sad experience to give such a narrative of their sufferings as follows. Let it be taken, if so thought fit, as a mere statement of a *possible* case.

A well-known dramatic author, of more or less ability, is commissioned by an actress of great and acknowledged talent to construct for her a play in which she can perform certain characters of an exceptional type. He sets to work and invents his plot. He draws up an elaborate *scenario*, which meets with the entire approval of the talented artist. But then she desires to have a child introduced, on whom she can lavish maternal tenderness. In vain the poor author remonstrates that this child will hamper and disjoint his plot considerably. She insists ; and the author foolishly gives way, entirely against his own judgment and dramatic instinct, and "lugs in" the child with much trouble, and with every effort of ingenuity in his power to round-off an obvious excrescence. But still the actress is not content. Now she wants a drunken, or semi-drunken, scene. Again the author protests that such a scene would materially diminish the sympathy of her character in the eyes of an audience, and would be repugnant to his own feelings. Again she insists ; and again the author is "fool enough"—the term must not be spared him—to give way. Alas ! that he should have done so ; for these two points—the interpolated child, and the repulsive and irrelevant drunken scene—are exactly those which the critics, in the sad eventualities of the drama's fate, most strenuously condemn. It is to be hoped that there are not many authors so weak and foolish as this one in his concessions to wrong-headed demands of an actress.

Well! the elaborate *scenario* is complete. It meets with the unmitigated approval of the commissioning artist, who expresses her delight. The author, or rather the inventor and constructor of the drama, is too much hampered by his other avocations to give the necessary time to the composition of the dialogue. He calls in the aid of a friend, on whose literary ability and dramatic instinct he has the greatest reliance. The dialogue is written; and again the actress expresses not only her approval, but her admiration of it. So far the relations between the artist and the authors chime as pleasantly as "marriage-bells." The union appears most satisfactory.

Weeks, months, almost years of labour have been bestowed on the play. The actress is most anxious to produce it. She proposes America, but to this intention the authors object; as, by the first production of the play in the States, the English copyright would be lost to herself as well as to them. With difficulty she obtains a first-rate theatre in London, and rents it for a period for the sole purpose of producing the drama, on which she has the most unqualified reliance. Again, "so far, so good!"

The time comes for the arrangement of "terms" between the parties. The authors make every concession to the actress; they reduce their requirements to the lowest extent; they are "beaten down" to a minimum. The contract is drawn up by the actress's own solicitor for the full protection of *her* interests; but it would appear that she does not content herself with the terms finally agreed on by her own legal man of business and old friend; for immediately afterwards she designates one author as "a scoundrel" before a stranger, and when the other expostulates warmly in defence of his friend, declares that she does not call *him* "a scoundrel," as she "respects old age." But she still stamps him as the intimate associate of "a scoundrel," and wonders that he should resent the obvious implication.

Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.

It would be as well, perhaps, to finish with the mention of "the actress" now. This designation is merged in that of "the management." The sufferings of the authors from the conduct of "the management" begin from the very first rehearsal. It ("the management") grossly insults one of the authors at every turn. If he ventures to open his mouth to explain the meaning of his words, he is violently assailed with the term "objectionable person," as interrupting the rehearsals and interfering with the stage-management—little as the mere interpretation of words can have any bearing in theatrical minds on the stage-management, as properly understood. At every moment he is treated with the most barefaced insolence. Anxious to avoid all open rupture with the management, he is obliged to subside into a forced nonentity, and bears the repeated insults still heaped on him with a gentlemanly forbearance which seems impossible to mortal nature.

Nor does the other author escape scot-free. All remarks necessary to be made at rehearsal now forcibly fall to his lot; but every time that he rises to expostulate against unlicensed interpolations of sentences—chiefly as regards the objectionable drunken "business" which is attempted to be amplified, and the almost equally objectionable child who is to be thrust forward

far beyond the original intention, at every available or non-available opportunity, to the destruction of all symmetry in the plot and continuity of interest,—he is only met by contumely and scorn. If concessions are apparently made to his expostulations, he finds them withdrawn on the very next occasion.

So far all is seemingly done with openness. The authors have still to find that *surreptitiously*, without their knowledge and against their will, important alterations have been made, to their confusion and to the detriment of the play. It is only at the last moment they discover that the language of the principal part has been cut out by the management and its own bald balderdash substituted—that sentences in the same strain have been written in profusely without their knowledge, and, of course, without any attempt to obtain their consent. At this last moment—the night dress-rehearsal—they begin to have an inkling that a sensation scene, on the invention of which the contriver of the *scenario* had (perhaps foolishly—his folly has been already admitted) prided himself, was to be ruthlessly omitted; that firearms were to be used, contrary to the authors' express prohibition, in a mediæval play, and that a variety of incongruities had been foisted in.

If the poor dramatists, who were responsible for the merits or demerits of their play, knew of the cruel treatment with which it had met, their obvious and inevitable course would have been to obtain an injunction, by which to restrain the management from playing the piece at all in its mangled state. But it would be impossible to struggle against the unknown when means are taken throughout to prevent their knowledge of the surreptitious injustice done them.

The play is naturally a failure; as naturally it is mercilessly “slated” by the dramatic critics of the day. In face of the adverse criticisms—the word “adverse” is the mildest which can be given—the authors have nothing to do but humbly bow their heads. Critics can do no more than judge a play as they see it represented on the stage. But they little know how much the intentions of the authors may be perverted and their efforts mangled. They could scarcely even dream of the injustice done them by the management—to say nothing of the insults to which they may have been daily compelled to submit on the stage—and even setting aside the crowning one of the withholding of the fees due for the few nights during which the piece was played until the receipt for them is *previously* handed over.

M. SARDOU AT MARLY.

BY FRÉDÉRIC O'KEENE.

THOUGH the majority of M. Sardou's plays are pictures of contemporary life and manners in various aspects, he has been and is a diligent student of the past, and it is in a spot rich in historical associations that he

has chosen to reside. Proceeding one day from Versailles to Paris, Louis XIV., temporarily weary of the splendours of his court, abruptly halted on the hills of Luciennes and ran his eye over the valley beneath. "How peacefully," he exclaimed, "must life glide away in such a place as this! Here, in a sort of hermitage, I might come and forget the world and my court. I have already spent a good deal in building; a mere nothing would suffice for me. What is the name of the village on the slope of the hill?" "Marly, sire," was the reply. "Well, gentlemen, we will come to Marly two or three times a year to seclude ourselves and expiate our sins." The same evening the king sent for the royal architect and directed him to erect the hermitage without loss of time. Soon after this, however, Madame de Maintenon made her way to the foot of the throne, and at her wish a magnificent château was erected instead of the modest hermitage originally proposed. Nothing that refined taste could suggest or art accomplish was spared in the embellishment of the interior and the grounds. Trees were brought from Compiègne to make a forest and avenue; the hill in front was lowered in order that a view of the country beyond it might be obtained. No edifice is more closely associated than the château of Marly with the most important events in French history between that period and the Revolution. There it was that Madame de Maintenon, while organizing fêtes and receiving the homage of the proudest families in the country, induced the king to revoke the Edict of Nantes; there it was that the Grand Monarque heard of the military and other disasters which embittered the closing years of his reign; there it was that Marie Antoinette first saw the diamond necklace. Erected at a time when the people were half-starved through excessive taxation, the château naturally became an object of popular fury at the Revolution, and one day in 1793, in the space of a few hours, it was all but razed to the ground. The marble galleries and the richly-decorated saloons, with the paintings and sculpture they contained, were ruthlessly destroyed, and only a few porticos or columns of the splendid Château of Marly was left. In imagination, as we stand on the summit of the hill, with these remains before our eyes, the edifice still exists; and many scenes described by the caustic Saint Simon quickly occur to the mind. Thus we seem to see Madame de Maintenon as, seated in her sedan-chair, with the king's daughters standing beside her, she listened to the Grand Monarque while, hat in hand, he explained to her the groups on a fountain; or lords and ladies of the court "swimming in their gondolas" across the lake which their royal master had introduced with the forest already alluded to, or gaily-painted carriages making their way through the avenue of elms on the occasion of a fête. To a student of history, indeed, Marly presents irresistible attractions; and it is because M. Sardou feels these attractions in all their force that he resides in that once unsightly but now pretty town.

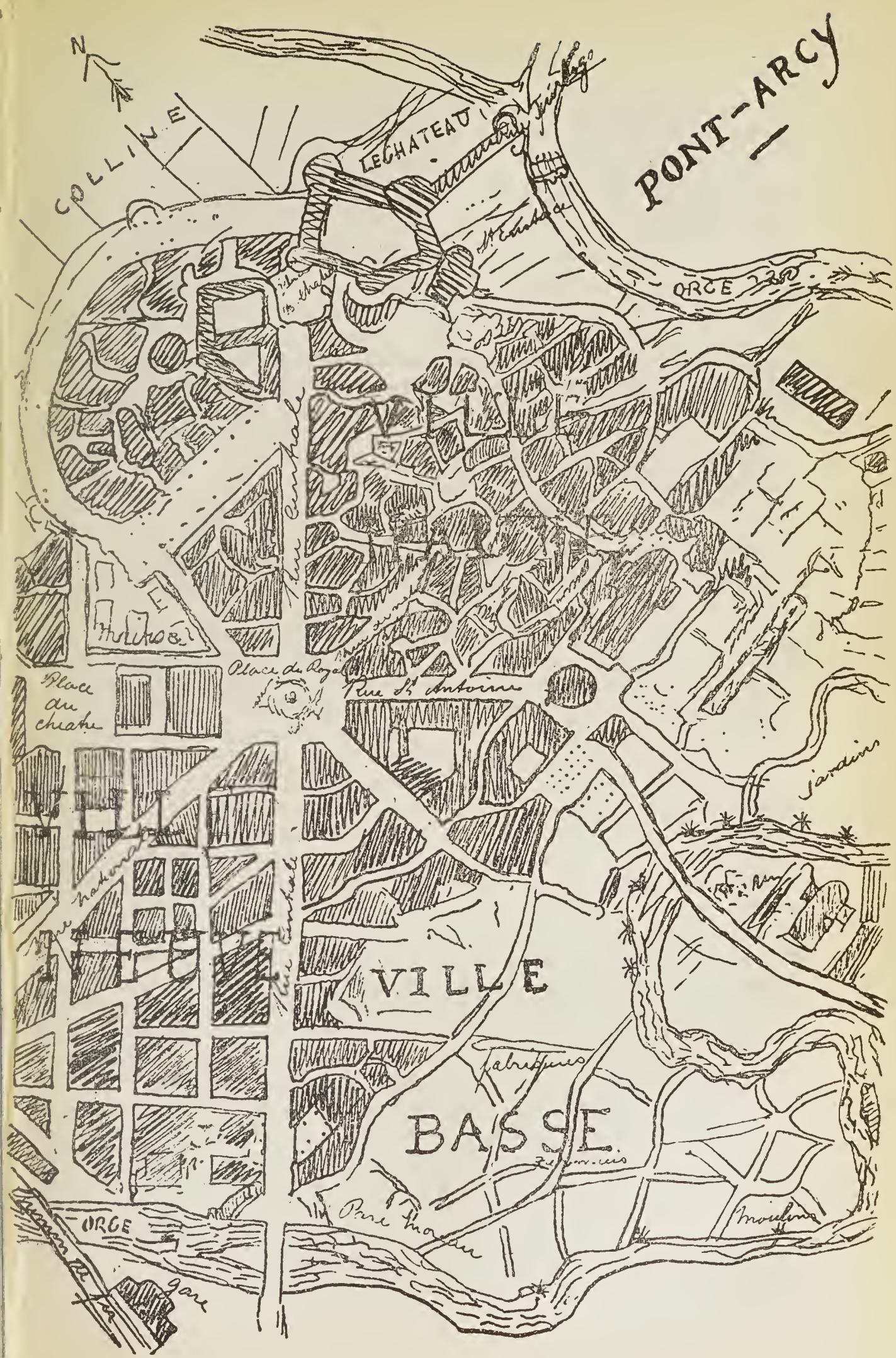
Le Verduron, as his residence is called, is itself full of interest. It was built upon the ruins of a feudal château, Marly-le-Châtel, the property of the Montmorencies, by order of Louis XIV., who in the first instance assigned it to his chief valet-de-chambre, Blouin. The latter, it seems, was a friend to art and letters, and such men as Racine and Boileau were

frequently to be found at his hospitable table. From him it passed to the Comtesse de Vassé, and from her to the Comte de Jancourt. Its fourth possessor was Legendre de Villemorien, who, like the first, made it a resort of the most cultivated men of his time. During the Revolution it was bought by Charles Trudaine, a son of the never-to-be-forgotten Directeur des Ponts-et-Chaussées ; but a few hours after the transfer was made he was arrested and guillotined. The property was then sold, a half of the proceeds going to the State, and the remainder to Trudaine's heirs. For some years after this it had no tenant ; indeed, the story goes that General Bonaparte, while out hunting, passed on horseback through its spacious *salle-à-manger*. Eventually, however, it was purchased by M. Ravel, a banker, and upon his death by a lady of the Montmorency-Luxembourg family. The latter dying, her heir, the Prince de Luxembourg, ceded it to MM. de Béthune-Sully, who used it as a residence for their mother. This lady, we are told, had lost her reason through her husband having been killed in a duel, and from that hour the sight of a man never failed to throw her into a paroxysm of rage. One afternoon in the summer of 1863 a horseman halted in front of the house, and, addressing an old woman standing by, asked whether he might look over it. The reply was in the negative. "To whom does the place belong ?" "To Madame de Béthune-Sully." "Is she visible ?" "No." "Why ?" "Because she died yesterday." On his return to Paris, the horseman, aware of the historic interest of the house, instructed his notaire to buy it, and in the course of a few days Le Verduron became the property of M. Sardou.

The author of *Nos Intimes* and *Dora* receives us with great cordiality, not to say *empressement*, as we are ushered into his drawing-room, which, like other apartments in the house, is full of rare engravings, antiquities, curiosities, and old china. M. Sardou is of medium height, with a thin face, sharp features, penetrating eyes, and a kindly smile. He plunges into conversation with great animation, and before long you feel that you are in the presence of no ordinary man. Johnson's well-known remark about Burke might not unjustly be applied to the great French dramatist. The conversation ranges over a variety of topics, and is frequently enlivened by a stroke of wit or an *à propos* illustration. M. Sardou is not more than forty years of age, though he looks somewhat older. Not only has he gone through an astonishing amount of brain-work, but his early life, as all his friends know, was a course of ill-requited toil and bitter privation. Twenty years ago, as has already been stated in *The Theatre*, a young man, pale and lean and shabby, was to be seen wandering at night, in very inclement weather, in the vicinity of the Medical School of Paris. Fortune had not been kind to him, and he was meditating suicide. To shelter himself from the rain he went into a doorway, abstractedly leaving it, however, a few moments afterwards. A water-carrier promptly took the place of shelter thus abandoned, audibly remarking, "Ah, mon ami, you do not know when you are well off." The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a block of granite fell upon and killed him. Every unfortunate man is said to be superstitious, and M. Sardou, believing from this accident that he had yet room to hope, went home and again took up his pen. The result was not

immediately encouraging, but in the course of a few months Mdlle. Déjazet became his friend, and at length, in 1860, the managers of the Gymnase were induced to bring out a comedy from his pen. "If I fail," said the author, "I shall start to-morrow for the United States and try my luck at journalism." The play was the *Pattes de Mouche*, so skilfully adapted to, or rather re-constructed for, the English stage by Mr. Palgrave Simpson. Thanks to its own merits and the acting of M. Lafontaine and Mdlle. Rose Chéri, it proved decidedly successful; so successful, in fact, that M. Sardou incontinently abandoned all thoughts of seeking fortune in any country save his own. From that time he has produced plays in rapid succession; and but one of these, *La Haine*, can be said to have failed. *Nos Intimes*, *Patrie*, *Fernande*, and *Dora* placed him in the front rank of French dramatists, and the great body of his countrymen, notwithstanding political differences, must have felt that he only received his deserts when the Academy elected him as one of the learned forty.

Before long M. Sardou conducts us to his library, which is arranged in a most methodical manner. Here his principal comedies have been written. "I work five hours every day," he says in reply to a question, "and at that rate of working it takes me five months to construct and write a comedy. The dramatist must not be afraid of what an English writer calls the labour and delay of the file. The rehearsals of a five-act piece take at least five weeks. That strange-looking paper on the table is a pen-and-ink map of Pontarcy, the scene of my last comedy," a version of which is about to be produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. "Pontarcy, I need not tell you, exists only in my imagination, and in order to avoid any mistakes or confusion as to the movements of the personages I have drawn up the map now before you. Here is the *ville basse*. The staple industry of the town is leather-dressing, and along the banks of the river are many tan-yards and water-mills. In this quarter, in the house of the maire, there lives a family which represents the modern bourgeoisie, and in that respect presents a decided contrast to the inmates of the house facing the square. Both these groups play important parts in my piece. The railway having been extended to Pontarcy, a row of handsome houses, with a theatre, an hotel, and a grand *café*, have been built in the neighbourhood of the railway station. Let us now pass to *la ville haute*. First of all, there is a château partly in ruins, and what remains of it is used as a station for the gendarmerie. The old convent in the vicinity has become a library and a museum. The church on the outskirts of the place was formerly a cloister. The *ville haute*, as you see, is a network of narrow streets, now comparatively deserted. In the centre there is a rather fine old Gothic pump. This map, I believe, has been of great use to me. In imagination I have gone through the streets, lodged at the Grand Hotel, inspected the *cloître*, and stood in reverential awe before the rather fine old Gothic fountain." M. Sardou did not add that in imagination he had also gone to the theatre, but it is permissible to suppose that he had fancied himself "assisting" there at a performance of one of his own pieces. Of this map a fac-simile is now before the reader. Like Mr. Byron, M. Sardou attaches great importance to the construction of a play, and as a rule does not write a line until the story is fully deter-



mined upon, the meaning of every scene settled, and every entrance and exit pre-arranged. He then goes to work with a mass of notes before him, turning them to account or putting them aside as they suit or fail to answer his purpose. His first two acts are in the true spirit of comedy, the three others dramatic. "Though often told this is wrong," he says, "I believe it is right. During the first two acts I make the characters as amusing as I consistently can, but not after the action has really commenced. The audience is then well-disposed from the outset, and wish to be moved a little before the curtain falls. If I succeeded in making them cry from the beginning to the end, they would say they were not at the Ambigu; if I succeeded in making them laugh all through, they would say the piece was flimsy." In his study, as at rehearsal, M. Sardou, owing in part to neuralgia, is as irritable as a poet; in the drawing-room, twinges of neuralgia notwithstanding, he is a genial host and as delightful a talker as even French literary society can exhibit.

A LAST NIGHT ON BOARD.

BY IZA DUFFUS HARDY.

IT was the Doctor on board our good ship who got up Our Concert, and pressed into service every individual of us who was, or at least, who deemed him or herself able, to sing, to play, or to recite. For Our Concert, by a conveniently liberal interpretation of the term, was to include the dramatic element. We all warmly seconded the Doctor's movement, and placed our limited talents at his disposal with unlimited enthusiasm, for the mild excitements of shuffle-board and rope-quoits were by this time beginning to pall upon us.

The entertainment was to have taken place on our last evening on the Atlantic. Possibly it was our Doctor's professional experience of ocean-travellers which induced him to defer it until we should be through the Straits of Belleisle and in the presumably calmer waters of the Gulf. The Gulf, however, ungraciously received us with rougher handling than the Atlantic had done: consequently, our chief songstress lost her voice; our pianiste complained that her hands trembled so she could not play a note; and the Doctor had again to put aside his cherished Concert in favour of the composition of soothing effervescent draughts. But the next day, as we steamed serenely along the waveless waters of the beautiful river St. Lawrence, there was a pleasant stir of excitement on board, as the preparations for our entertainment were in full swing.

From the saloon arose the well-known melody of "Ah! once again!" from the companion-way issued the tender strains of "The Owl and the Pussy-cat," to the gentle twang of a banjo accompaniment. On the deck one young man marched with folded arms, rehearsing, with appropriate action, "Cato's soliloquy," while another sat under an umbrella on the skylight absorbed in the difficult task of selecting from a volume of Mark

Twain the most screaming of the "Screamers." A book entitled a *Thousand and One Gems* was handed from one to another of our emulous elocutionists that they might study suitable *morceaux* for recitation. It was at first contemplated to invite the steerage passengers to attend Our Concert, and one prominent member of our party suggested, "I'm sitting by the stile, Mary!" as well calculated to touch the hearts of the Irish emigrants; but when it was decided that the dimensions of the saloon rendered it necessary to limit the entertainment to the first-class passengers, he substituted the suitable ditty of "A Life on the Ocean Wave."

In the zest of these preparations, our invalid (we had still one invalid on the Doctor's hands), forgot her ailments, and appeared in a new cap with pink ribbons; our flirting couple (strange to relate, we had only one romance on board!) withdrew to a secluded corner with the *Thousand and One Gems* between them, and bent their heads very close together over. They said it was *The Ride to Aix from Ghent*; but their air would rather have suggested "Love is waking! shall it wake in vain?" Our theorist with a "hobby," from whom some fled, and with whom others fought, for once left his hobby in the stable—it was rarely that he gave the poor steed a rest!—and joined in the general interest. We liked our friend with the hobby—he was so cheery, so kind, so helpful; but his hobby was one which life on board ship brought into distressingly constant exercise. His watchwords were, "Abstemiousness in health," and "Starvation in sickness!" and we did wax wroth with him sometimes when he ran a-tilt at our invalids, whose dainty appetites our pearl of stewardesses was coaxing with delicacies, and charged them solemnly to "dash down that bowl" of chicken-broth, or invoked "the malison of outraged nature" on such as dared to blaspheme her by partaking of lemon-jelly for luncheon.

The evening came, and we assembled in the saloon, where our energetic Doctor had moved the piano, and provided an extra allowance of candles, and a box of lozenges to cool the throats of his faithful *troupe*. The Concert opened with that most appropriate selection, "A Life on the Ocean Wave," during which the depressing fact dawned upon us that the accompaniment of the rhythmical beat of the engines thundering under the saloon floor would drown all our *pianissimo* passages, while the soft and subtle modulations of our voices would be completely lost. So the entertainment progressed under difficulties. Those of the audience who were close to the performers might hear what was being said and sung; but those whose seats were further off got their entertainment only in dumb-show, and had to guess by the air of the performer whether his or her expressed sentiments were of the martial or the tender kind. It was noticeable, by the way, that the sexes appeared to have changed characteristics on this occasion: the ladies gave us "The Battle of the Alma," the "Charge of the Light Brigade," and "How they brought the Good News from Ghent," and by exerting all the power of their lungs succeeded in vanquishing now and then the "thud, thud" of the engines; while the gentlemen related to us the loves of the "Owl and the Pussy-cat" (banjo accompaniment), told us melodiously how it was "But a little faded flower," or conjured their lost loves to meet them only "Once again." During these performances I think the engines had the better of it.

Our theorist, clad in his wife's waterproof and a poke-bonnet, aroused great enthusiasm by a character-song, in which he announced that he was "Sweet Sixteen;" but the grand sensation of the evening was expected to be an "Imitation of Mr. Irving in *Hamlet*," given by a youthful genius who never missed a first night at the Lyceum. I suppose most of us had heard a good many such imitations before, and so perhaps we failed to appreciate this. No doubt it was a capital performance, what was audible of it, but that was not much, and it was gratefully applauded, especially by one enthusiast, who kept calling, "Encore! Bells! Bells!" until our Irving *pro tem.* consented to favour us with a further specimen of his art, and succeeded in drowning the machinery with his wild shriek of "The Bells," the steward kindly giving him the cue by ringing the dinner-gong at intervals.

We wound up by singing "God Save the Queen." It might have been in better time and tune, but I am sure it was never chorussed with more fervour and sincerity than by her gracious Majesty's loyal subjects on board the royal mail steamer, which shall be nameless, that July night on the St. Lawrence river, in the last hour of our united party. For that very hour the signal rockets went up from Father Point, and the steam-tender came off from Rimouski, skimming over the calm black water in a blaze of light, to land our mails and the passengers for the train. And then and there our merry party broke up, some of us going on to Quebec, some of us landing in the Rimouski tender, with mutually waving hands and hats and handkerchiefs, and—was there *one* tear shed? Good-bye to our theorist, his hobby forgotten, and only his kind and genial smile remembered. Good-bye to our would-be Irving; good-bye to the young man with the banjo and blue ribbon; good-bye to the sentimentalist we shall never laugh at more. We shall never meet all together again on earth, that happy and harmonious little company, amongst whom even the *ennui* of sea-sickness sowed no division. I think that reflection was the only thing which cast a shadow over the mirth of that bright spot in memory—our last night on board.

BALL'S NEW POEM.

BY CRANK.

WE are proud of the honour of introducing Ball. He is the property-man of the Strand Theatre, and he is also the Strand Theatre's own peculiar poet. Bards such as Farnie may come and bards may go, but Ball runs on for ever. He not only mixes poetic honey with trade wax, but, like the late Herr von Joel, of Evans's (*Old Style*), he is perpetually retained on the establishment. It was not always thus with eminent Thespians who dabbled in dramatic literature. It is by no means the custom now. If Shakspere and Garrick were, in a manner of speaking, "fixed stars," Thomas Otway was not: neither are Henry J. Byron, F. C. Burnand, Sir Randal Roberts, Bart., Thomas Mead, and other well-known literary members of the Thespian profession; but Ball (if one may

make the observation) is for ever *spotted* at the Strand. Those who have not encountered him outside the property-room of that house of entertainment will be interested in knowing that he is the author of "An Address to Mrs. Swanborough;" an "Ode to Miss Ada on her Birthday;" "Stanzas to Mr. Arthur Swanborough on seeing him with the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire"—

Twin gentlemen of portly mien !

a "Remonstrance Addressed to Mr. Edward Swanborough on Cutting Down a Property Bill,"—

Ah ! cruel Edward, tell your Ball, &c.

and numerous other works. His most recent effort, a copy of which is now before us, is a poem entitled "Madame Favart at the Strand." This remarkable effusion is enriched by "An Occasional Admirer" with a prefatory note. Why "An Occasional Admirer" should have felt it incumbent upon him to conceal his identity beneath so vague a veil it is impossible to divine. We know, of course, that in relation to their own merits modest men are dumb: but why this dumbness in connection with such a bard as Ball? If, as we suspect, the author of the prefatory note is Mr. H. B. Farnie, and we know of no other author who could embody so much gentle humour in so small a compass, we can account for the effacement. Ball is a British bard. Had Gaul given him birth, Mr. Farnie's (or some other "original" Briton's) name would unquestionably have been attached to that prefatory note, "and more also." On another account the anonymity of the author of the introduction to Ball is surprising, if that author, indeed, be Mr. Farnie. It betrays on his part a novel distaste for partnerships. We have had Beaumont and Fletcher, Erckmann-Chatrian, Bolton Rowe and Savile Rowe, Taylor and Merritt, Conquest and Pettitt, then why, oh! why not Farnie and Ball?

In reference to the mellifluous Eusden of the Strand Theatre his introducer says:—"It was early seen what was the matter with him when the properties were not up to time; it was understood that it was owing, not to negligence, but to poetry. When anything was not quite what it should be, which in an ordinary property-man might be attributed to beer, in our author's case it was genius." In such wise doth one generous genius stand sponsor for another! But let us to Ball. Canto I. of his poem touches on the early history of the Strand Theatre :

Most celebrated artists have trod the Strand boards,
Oft-times playing before princes, dukes, and lords ;
At the Strand they won their popular name ;
At the Strand they gained an amount of fame ;
Coming like young recruits on Camp of Curragh,
They owe part of their greatness to Mrs. Swanborough.

Ball's is a discreet as well as a daring style. "They owe *part* of their greatness" is a most careful expression, while the rhyme to Swanborough is courageous to temerity. His admiration of that estimable lady does equal credit to his head and heart. He says of her,

Twenty-one years as lessee she has held the reins,
Paying everybody, when her losses exceeded her gains.

Canto I. concludes with a description of how she consulted

Two popular gentlemen, each worthy of the ermine robe,
Mr. H. B. Farnie, and Mr. Henderson, lessee of the Globe :
the result of which conference was the production of

Madame Favart on Easter Eve :
A glorious settlement, I most firmly believe.

Canto II. describes a trip to Paris undertaken by a party selected for the purpose by Mr. Henderson :—

There was Mons. Alias, the great theatrical costumier,
And Mr. Arthur Swanborough, we hold so dear ;
A great instigator of the opera being produced :
No doubt his opinion Mrs. Swanborough induced,
Knowing her son had sufficient theatrical knowledge,
Being once a director of the Dramatic College.

There is an obscurity about that last line which is singular in a poet of Ball's habitual lucidity. Does he wish us to understand that it was the recollection of Mr. Arthur's former position as a director of the Dramatic College that induced Mrs. Swanborough to take his advice and produce the opera ? It is related in another part of the same canto that—

Mr. Farnie's party having arrived safe in France,
To the Folies Dramatiques did bodily advance ;
The scenery was noticed, the music was heard,
The dresses were noticed by one that can dress a bird.

The delicacy of Ball's compliment to Mons. Alias on his culinary skill will be remarked : “One that can dress a bird.” The double-barrelled allusion, as one might say, is worthy of Hood. In Canto III. Ball changes the measure, how happily will be seen by the following quatrain :—

Not one critic was down upon,
But to the very echo praised,
The gifted Miss Florence St. John
To the pinnacle of fame have raised.

I could mention all her songs,
But others have to follow on ;
But the great success still belongs
To pretty Miss Florence St. John.

As for Miss Violet Cameron, who is named, Ball believes, after a beautiful flower,

Her beauty sets one's eyes a twitching
Gifted as she is with great vocal power,

while Miss Randolph, who is both “pretty” and “beautiful,” and “most affectionate and kind in disposition,”

Seems born to charm and to fascinate
Surpassing the Peris, and even Lurline.

A rather large order this in the way of comeliness, considering that she is also pronounced to be as good-looking as Undine. M. Marius, one is not surprised to learn, is both “realistic” and “artistic.” The reason is to be found in the exigencies of rhyme. Having declared at the end of one line that he was “realistic,” the bard was bound to aver at the end of another that the gifted Gaul was also something “-istic.” Ball is to be felicitated on having chosen the right word. He might have pressed “mystic” into the service of his muse, or even “fistic.” Is M. Marius “off the boards a perfect wit?”

Ball says so. The greatness of Mr. Ashley as "a comedian without any deception" is next pointed out, and likewise the significant fact that his "cordial reception" "comes from strangers, not paid or admitted friends." Marry, come up, thou satirical rogue of a poet; at whom dost thou gird? Mr. Cox has a face which "is a study for any stage," and we are informed that Mr. De Lange, the effervescent Netherlander, is "the possessor of a pair of eyes that sparkle fire from his nose." The colloquial character of the expression,

In this scene the great Jefferson is done brown,
cannot blind us to the bard's acumen. If he will pardon our saying so, Ball has an eye for the flower that blushes unseen—even for such a bursting bud as the undiscovered De Lange. Canto IV., in length three stanzas and a half, is devoted "to that talented gentleman Fitzgerald;" and Canto V. to E. Swansborough, "a gentleman who is exceedingly funny, both in private and when paying of money." Canto V. is remarkable for its brevity. It is exactly eight lines long. From the epilogue, ten lines in length, we quote, as a fitting termination to our all-imperfect review, the poet's defiant prediction,

A failure of Madame Favart I defy,
She'll run through seasons, wet or dry.

There can be no doubt of it. Her capacity to run through a wet season is already established. We should be only too delighted to see it tested through a dry one.

The poem is elegantly printed, upon paper of uncommon thickness. The margins are broad, the cover is glazed, the lettering thereon is golden, and the price of the entire work is one shilling. It is published at the theatre. In bidding a fond farewell to the poet Ball and his most magnanimous introducer, let us hope that we may soon have an opportunity of meeting them in harmonious conjunction again.

ACTORS' BLUNDERS.

BY WALTER BAYNHAM.

WHAT actor can affirm conscientiously, "I never to my knowledge distressed a 'star.'" Of all topics talked of in dramatic circles that of blunders is one of the most amusing. Stars (dressing-gowned and slippereed, and long afterwards) revel in the relation of these their former miseries, due to either ignorance, nervousness, or stupidity on the part of their supporters (?). Blunders in the matter of words, stage-business, scenery, properties,—of these Mr. Irving, Mr. Barry Sullivan, Mr. Sothern, Mr. Toole, Mr. Dillon constitute in their respective stories a whole encyclopedia of facts. Everyone nearly will have heard how when Mr. Toole, playing Simmonds at Greenock, expected Dawson to bring him on a nosegay, that gentleman having made a stage-wait, "in the alarm of fear caught up" and presented him with a "scone;" how Mr. Barry Sullivan, when rehearsing Hamlet, demanded to see the Shaksperean "pipe," the property man of the

Prince of Wales's, Glasgow, offered him a "cutty;" how the ghost would come on at the side where Mr. Irving least expected him, remarking at the time, "I'm here!" how one Belphegor remarked (being at a loss for a climax), "That his poor donkey, Mutton, died—*standing on one leg.*"

Sad, indeed, is the age of progression. Well-organized travelling companies have now all but wiped out any chance of these at one time "inevitables." The palmy days when every actor played weekly eight or nine new parts are gone. The sun has all but set upon actors' blunders. Of nearly all of them a rapid study of the words, so identified with the country work of the past, was the prolific cause. Blunders are now chiefly confined to the sphere of managers. As it was in the beginning, so it is now, and, I suppose, ever will be. Some of the most intelligent manager-actors have in other respects been of all men the densest, dullest, most stupid. We all recollect the story of the best "old man" of his day, who objected to Iago being played by Leigh Murray. "Murray," he said, "you're too young! can't look it! Iago was old, much older than Othello; he's spoken of as his 'Ancient.'" Not a hundred miles from where I write, and within as many days, an excellent manager, Irish comedian, asked his stage-manager "What's *Hamlet* about? Do you know the *plot*?" Another (not Hibernian) was in doubt as to whether or not *The Lady of Lyons* was an opera-bouffe. With a third (a splendid business man) the following dialogue took place between himself and the stage door-keeper during an engagement of Mr. Sothern's. The comedian's name had been advertised by "sandwich" boards. Of the name each board bore on it but a single letter, thus spelling it out in full. Inspecting each board in its order, "Where's the H-en?" asked the manager, with a suspicious glance, as though the door-keeper had surreptitiously appropriated it for his own family. "Waur's the what?" replied the mystified Scotch door-keeper. "The H-en?" shouted the excited manager. "I hac na sin the animal, sir." "Ugh," growled the infuriated lessee between his set teeth, "yer fool, I don't mean the 'en as lays the heggs, but the Hen at the hend."

Ignorance is, of course, amongst a certain class of actors still rampant, some not understanding even their own language. I once heard a prompter remark with a chuckle (on the occasion of an actor's substituting for the word "lugubrious" that of "melancholy") "I knew it! I was sure of it; he could'n say 'lugorous.'" On another occasion the same qualified stage-director during a rehearsal of *The Brigand* was heard shouting everywhere for Maria Grazier (Marie Grazie). His name, strangely enough, was English; we called him "Bad English." The late Mr. Charles Mathews used to relate that on one occasion in *The Critic* the gentleman who had rehearsed Lord Burleigh in the morning was at night missing. "Send on anybody," said the stage-manager. The "anybody" was found, dressed, and the book put into his hands. He read the stage direction, "Enter Lord Burleigh, bows to Dangle, shakes his head, and exits." "Anybody" did enter, bowed to Dangle, shook his (Dangle's) head, and made his exit. An "anybody" was under similar circumstances sent on in Knowles's play of *The Wife* to say "St. Pierre waits below." He read the words, mistook the significance of the St., and announced "The street-pier is a waitin'

below." He alleged when remonstrated with, "It was not to be expected as anyone could swallow *Shakespere* only from the mornin."

Nervousness has, however, much to do with blunders. The late Charles Kean from this cause one night transposed the lines in *Hamlet*—

Who tweaks me by the nose, plucks off my beard,
And blows it in my face.

to

Who tweaks me by the beard, plucks off my nose,
And blows it in my face.

The James in *Used Up*, completely unnerved by the importance Mathews attached to the exact pronunciation of the name of the lady James had to announce, Lady Clutterbuck, at night took the comedian aback by informing him that he was wanted by Lady Lethebridge. Macready was in a similar way victimized in *Virginius*. The "Numitorius" [couldn't remember his own name. "You will remember it, sir," said the tragedian, carefully pronouncing it for him, "by the association of ideas. Think of Numbers, the Book of Numbers." The Numitorius did think of it all day, and at night produced, through "the association of ideas," the following effect:

Numitorius. Where is Virginia? Wherfore do you hold
That maiden's hand?

Claudius. Who asks the question?

Numitorius. I! her uncle—Deuteronomy.

On another occasion I heard an actor (famous in coming to grief in any important part, through nervousness) make, as Duncan, the following proclamation:—

We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The DUKE (Prince) of Cumberland.

Then, hearing the suppressed titter of his thanes, he corrected himself with—

That is, I mean—the Prince of Wales!

From a similar cause a Desdemona declared—

I saw Othello's visage in his eye (for mind).

The slip was most extraordinary, for it chanced that the Othello had but one eye. Some actors (in fact, the great majority) blunder neither from nervousness, stupidity, nor ignorance,—they are careless in committing to memory the exact words. They get, as they say, the sense; will "swallow any amount of them from morning." How do they digest them!

I once played Faulkland to a Julia who subsequently held an enviable position on the London stage. Instead of inquiring what I "had taken ill," she said, "Nay, then, I see you've taken something which has disagreed with you. Oh! tell me what it is!" Fabien, in *The Corsican Brothers*, informed us one evening, instead of "That his brother Louis had gone to Paris to pursue his course of study in medicine," that "he had gone to Paris to undergo a course of medicine." One night at Brighton, on the first night of the production there of Buckstone's *Sea and Land*, the gentleman who had to make the announcement, "We've taken the villain Crouch," stated that he "had

secured that scoundrel Cripps." This, too, was a sad blunder, amounting to a personality, for one of the most frequent patrons of the theatre rejoiced in the name of Cripps, and was at the time enjoying the drama in the front row of the pit. Cripps never came again. In the *Lady of Lyons* who hasn't heard the First Officer remark of Damas, " You'll only chaff (chafe) him "? A few nights since Deschappelles, a gushing youth, told us, instead of " I'll go at once to the magistrate's and inquire," that he meant " to go to the magistrate's and—run him in." Glavis, too, on one occasion, after a short " study," alleged, instead of that " in all cases of heart-ache the application of another man's disappointment drew out the pain and allayed the irritation," that " another fellow's disappointment acted like a poultice on the chest."

I remember that at Newcastle, when the theatre was under the management of Mr. E. D. Davis, an actor, the wit of the green-room, indulged in the following pleasantry on the stage. Compelled to play Titus in *Virginius*, he had to ask,

At least you'll say we did well in electing Quintius
Petillius, Caius Duellius, and Spurius Oppius,"

instead of which he playfully substituted for the Roman names—

" Mealy Potatoris, Careless Dillonius, and Quisby Oprobius."

On Saturday the wit's salary was paid in full ; but Mr. Davis, drawing back one half-crown, said " That is for Mealy Potatoris ; that," another half-crown, " for Careless Dillonius ; and that," a third half-crown, " for Quisby Oprobius."



THE THEATRE NO. 15, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Yours very truly
J. L. Toole

Portraits.

XXX.—MR. TOOLE.

TOWARDS the close of an autumnal day in 1838, Mr. E. L. Blanchard happening to pass through Shorne, a village about four miles from Gravesend, came upon the oddest group imaginable. "A little boy, scarcely six years of age, was the centre," we are told, "of an admiring throng of urchins, who seemed to be in the most exuberant state of delight at each fresh comicality of the entertainment, which seemed to consist of an imitation of a farm-yard, with a few voices dexterously thrown in. It was over before I could discover the reason for the merry peals of childish laughter which had reached me, but in a few moments the extremely juvenile monologist recommenced his performance without becoming aware of another being added to the audience. A dexterous rearrangement of his pinafore, a twist of his child's cap, and a small stick snatched from the hedge, and there was the miniature figure of an old man tottering rather than toddling about the garden; the few words uttered in simulated tones serving to identify a resemblance which evidently left the diminutive spectators in no doubt as to the fidelity of the likeness. Then came a change of face, another readjustment of the pinafore, and an altered tone, with a word and a whistle given by turns. This was quickly accepted as a faithful portraiture of a comic countryman well-known to the highly appreciative little assembly, and tiny hands were clapped gleefully as the voice of the rustic, simulated in childish treble, was heard to proclaim the necessity of giving something to an old grey mare. In answer to my inquiry as to the name of the amusingly precocious young gentleman, a giggling damsel, scarcely ten, lisped out, 'It's only a little London boy down for his health, Sir.' That little London boy was John Lawrence Toole, the subject of the present sketch. The second son of Mr. James Toole, toast-master to the Corporation of London, he was born within the sound of Bow Bells in 1832, and at the time of the incident just described, therefore, was exactly of the age guessed at by Mr. Blanchard. Not long afterwards his father sent him to the City of London School, where he distinguished himself by a marked taste for and proficiency in eloquentary exercises. In his twentieth year he was placed in a wine-merchant's office, but nothing could induce him to take kindly to the outsides of bottles and invoices, and before many months had elapsed the inborn passion for theatricals indicated at the village near Gravesend asserted itself with irresistible force. The consequence was that he joined a histrionic club which gave performances at the Walworth Institution. Fortunately for the stage, one of these performancees was witnessed by a really distinguished audience, including Dickens, Mark Lemon, Albert Smith, T. P. Cooke, and Mr. Blanchard. The author of *Pickwick* was delighted with the City clerk's acting; he declared that the young fellow was bound to get on as a player, and warmly counselled him to adopt the theatrical profession. "Have you ever seen Mr. Toole before?" somebody enquired to ask Mr. Blanchard during the evening. "Yes," was the

reply ; "I saw what I believe was the first entertainment he gave. That was fourteen years ago." Mr. Toolc eventually took Dickens's advice, making his first appearance on the regular stage, as Garrick had done, at the Ipswich Theatre. In 1854, after two or three years' probation in Ireland and Scotland, he appeared at the St. James's Theatre as Pepys in *The King's Rival* and Weazle in *My Friend the Major*. The first of these characters was not of the best, but Mr. Toole so completely redcemed the disadvantage by his acting in the other that from that night London became his home. In 1856 he migrated to the Lyceum, where he played Fanfaronade to the Belphegor of Mr. Dillon, and in 1859 to the Adelphi. During his engagement at the latter house he may be said to have laid the foundation of his great reputation. He showed that both in broad humour and moving pathos he found a congenial element. In *Ici On Parle Français* and the *Area Belle* he was irresistibly diverting ; as Caleb Plummer, in the *Cricket on the Hearth*, he stirred the finest sympathies of our nature. By no means the least remarkable of his Adelphi impersonations was that of Stephen Digges in Mr. Oxenford's adaptation of Balzac's *Père Goriot*, a play originally intended for Robson. Merriment, esteem, and sympathy are successively begotten by this character, and Mr. Toole proved fully equal to the task he had undertaken. In 1868 he went to the Queen's Theatre, and there, as Michael Garner in *Dearer than Life*, achieved another distinct success. Anything more natural and more touching than his embodiment of this fine old man can hardly be conceived. Next came his long connection with the Gaiety, to be rendered memorable from the outset by his acting as Dick Dollond—a sort of Doctor Marygold—in *Uncle Dick's Darling*. In 1875, having created at the Globe Theatre the part of Hammond Coote in *Wig and Gown*, he went to America. His success there, perhaps, was not so great as was to be expected, and in the autumn of the same year he returned to England. His last original character, Chawles, in *A Fool and his Money*, needs only passing mention. Mr. Toole's natural talents as a humoros and pathetic actor have been devloped as much by study of books and of men as by practical experience. He is to the stage what Hogarth was in painting and Dickens in the literature of fiction. He draws his inspiration from the life of persons about him, mentally taking notes of anything that may aid him in the delineation of special types of character. He often approaches and sometimes oversteps the verge of caricature, but is in no sense a caricaturist. "There is a geniality about his performances," Lord Rosebery once said, "which spreads an electric chain about his audiences, and makes them forget the actor in the friend. He possesses the magic and irresistible power of creative sympathy. No young man of my age has spent more money in stalls than I have to see him." In all the relations of private life, it should be added, Mr. Toole has never incurred reproach, and no member of his profession has given away more in public and private charity than he. "I may say," wrote the manager of an asylum for the insane in an annual report, "that the considerate kindness which compelled Mr. Toole to step aside from his pressing engagements, and request the privilege of again entertaining our people and pouring oil into their mental wounds, entitles him to a place in our hearts as the 'good Samaritan' of the stage."

Fenilton.

HUNTING AN HEIRESS.

BY LADY DUFFUS HARDY.

POYNTZ is a familiar name in —shire, and as old, they say, as the far-famed hills themselves. The family of Poyntz in old days had owned half the land in the county, but bit by bit it had slipped from their grasp and melted away by the extravagant follies of each succeeding generation, till John Poyntz succeeded to a possession of bare walls and barren lands, and, not having the wherewithal to repair or patch his fallen fortunes, he turned his back upon the old place and went to seek his bread elsewhere.

He marched to London to join the army of workers, or idlers, who are to be found there; for ever marching, marching on, and never seeming to reach the goal of their desires. John Poyntz fancied he had a turn for the stage, that refuge for the destitute of brains, of talent, of everything but vanity, where-with they are well clothed, inside and out. They are fairly tried, but when their doom is pronounced, they decline to accept it, and chase the phantom Fame more determinedly than ever. Well, young Poyntz, by dint of sheer energy and "push," made his way to the boards of a little barn-like theatre about half-a-dozen miles from town. His ambition pointed to Hamlet as a fit exponent of his genius; but the world will not rate us as we are apt to rate ourselves, and after grappling with many difficulties he was driven from the rôle of Hamlet, and took refuge in the Ghost. His representation of that "unsubstantial shadow," however, was so substantially and "humanly human" that the "sulphurous flames" and attendant horrors produced shouts of laughter rather than sighs of sympathy, and he was forced literally to "give up the ghost." But though he failed in ghostly gravity, he vowed he could crow like a cock; and in order to make the drama more realistic—in fact, as an improvement on "immortal Will"—it was decided that when the Ghost says—

But soft, methinks I scent the morning air,

the crowing of a cock was to be heard. Accordingly, Jack Poyntz was stationed at the wings, and in his hurry to show off his accomplishment he began to crow before the cue was given, and continued crowing long after the semblance of the royal Dane had departed, literally chasing it back to the land of shadows with a succession of violent crows. Disappointed in his country venture, he carried his talents to the London market; but there the supply of all that he had to offer was greater than the demand. His genius was left groaning upon his hands, and he fretted and fumed, a world-scorning, crushed, and disappointed man.

He next renewed his acquaintance with the rising actor Samuel Foote, from whom he had first imbibed his inglorious love of the stage. Into his ears he poured the story of his failures, or rather of the failure of the world's

judgment, and took him freely into his confidence concerning his needs and his desires. Foote's sensitive lips quivered, and his face broke into smiles, at the woes of hurt vanity. He could not pour milk-and-watery sympathy upon the wounds,—he was too accustomed to such scenes. He stroked his shaven chin gravely for a moment, then looked up quickly and said—

"Look here, Jack. Why don't you turn your eyes from the stage and look out for an heiress? That would be a far better speculation."

"Look out for an heiress! Pooh!" replied Poyntz, as though the idea was not new to him, but rather well-worn.

"You are well-looking, of good family, and thorough-bred," said Foote, regarding him critically, as though he were appraising a horse, "and I don't see why you shouldn't marry an heiress."

"Nor I, if I could find one."

"Pshaw! You must know plenty."

"Yes; but unfortunately they all know me," replied Poyntz, with a facetious grin. "I don't think they'd like to trust me, for fear I should make sandwiches of their bank-notes, and eat 'em. They know I have too many paper kites flying, and not one would be inclined to act as bobtail to keep 'em steady."

"Now look here, Jack, I'm a practical man," rejoined Foote. "You may smile, but I am, whatever this wicked old world may say to the contrary, and I think I can help you in this matter; indeed, we can both help one another."

"How? Catch an heiress and divide her between us?"

"Not exactly; but if we can find a lady, young or old, ugly or handsome —"

"I stipulate for beauty, served up with bank-notes and silver sauce. I could not face the matrimonial banquet unless it was garnished with all three, and a substantial stock of reputation to boot."

"You're so well furnished in that particular," laughed Foote.

"The less I have, the more I want," replied his imperturbable friend, "so don't be sardonic."

"Well, if I lime the twigs and eateth your heiress, I shall expect to share the fortune."

"That would be only fair."

"Say ten per cent., one month after the wedding-day."

"I agree to that," says Poyntz; "if you find the golden goose, you have a right to share the eggs."

"Now go your ways, Jack, and enjoy yourself as best you may, and meet me here, exactly at this time, this day four weeks."

They were seated in the little parlour of the old Bell Inn, on the banks of the river Thames, opposite the quaint irregular pile of buildings running along by Old Somerset House, which at that time was a most picturesque feature on the river, as it is now the most imposing. The sun was setting as they jumped into a wherry and directed the waterman to go towards old London-bridge. The river was alive with boats of all sorts and sizes, some with gay streamers flowing, filled with laughing city belles and prentice lads; others came [gliding] slowly along, laden with statelier crews from the

more courtly purlieus of Westminster. These lounged lazily back in their boats, enjoying the gay, animated scene, each occupied with his own secret, but their lips spoke no word of that which lay nearest their hearts. At London-bridge they parted, to meet no more till their trysting-time that day month.

Meanwhile, Mr. Foote employed himself assiduously in manipulating and maturing his plans. A few days later on, the celebrated actor might have been seen, in his favourite cinnamon-velvet coat with lace ruffles, swinging a smart cane in his hand, according to the fashion of the time, parading up and down the then fashionable locality, Queen Square, Bloomsbury. He walked first on one side, then on the other, evidently waiting for something or somebody. Presently his object was made clear. A pretty young girl came tripping down the steps from one of the houses and turned in the direction of Holborn. He quickened his pace and followed her. He walked by her side for a few moments and wished her "Good evening." With a pertness common to pretty waiting-maids, she answered him, and they walked on side by side, he beguiling the way with such conversation as he knew would be most pleasing to his companion. Seeing she carried a small bandbox, he offered to carry it. She refused his help with a saucy smile, saying—

"You might be taken for a man-milliner."

"In this case I don't think I should mind being taken for better or worse;" and he attempted to take it from her, but she held it fast.

"No, no! I can't trust you, it is too precious."

"Why, what is it?" he asked, curiously.

"You'd never guess! well, it is my mistress's head," she added, confidentially. "I am taking it to King, the barber in the Strand, to be done up for a ball to-night."

"And who may your mistress be? I warrant she is not half so pretty as her maid."

The girl tossed her head.

"She is the Honourable Miss Devereux, a great heiress, and she is very rich and very beautiful."

"Not half so beautiful as you, I'll swear; the brightness of her jewels could never match the brightness of your eyes," said the wily flatterer.

"Be off with your nonsense, do," said the girl, glancing with a demure smile up at the face beside her. His gross compliments, administered with such barefaced boldness, would have revolted a refined mind, but they were just suited to the maid's mental palate, and she took them down with a relish.

The ice once broken, they plunged into sentimental water forthwith, and when they parted, an hour after sunset, it was with the understanding that they were to meet again, and soon.

Through the loquacity of the maid, Mr. Foote had possessed himself of a great deal of information concerning Miss Devereux; he gathered together facts and scraps of her past history, grew learned in her present fancies, and comprehended her desires for the future; indeed, he was as familiar with her general character as if he had been admitted to a private view of

her daily life. Out of all which knowledge he was fast spinning the web which was to catch the heiress.

On one occasion, while he and the maid Flora were taking an evening stroll beneath the shady trees in St. James's Park, some reference was made by the girl to the wonderful chance of their first meeting. Foote, lowering his voice, with mysterious tones of awe, informed her that it was *not accidental*, that he had been forewarned that on just such an evening, and in such a manner, he would meet his fate. He then confided to her, in solemn secrecy, that he had had his horoscope cast and his future foreshadowed by a wonderful man, an Egyptian, who had lately come over to this country and taken up his residence in Wine-Office-court near Fleet-street. The girl listened with open-eyed wonder to the strange story he told her. That evening, as Flora assisted at the usual toilette of her mistress, the marvellous story was confided to her sympathetic ears.

Now Miss Devereux was not only young, rich, and beautiful, but was of a suspicious nature, which somewhat marred her other qualities. She was haunted by the idea that her admirers generally had designs upon her purse: this might be true, for flies will flutter round a golden honey-pot. So, whenever she found a liking growing within her for any special object, she crushed it down, and laid her gold like a gravestone over it. Flora's communication gave rise to a discussion on marriage generally, and the strange ways by which matches were brought about; hence arose a discussion on the merits of the many claimants for the lady's favour. The wily Flora best supported the pretensions of those who were most liberally disposed towards herself, and she was loud in the praises of a young Scotch baronet.

"He's young, good-looking, and writes such lovely verses," said the enthusiastic Flora.

"Trash! He has got an ugly knack of twisting plain phrases into prancing poetry. Silly rhymes trip from his tongue like dew from a horse's heels in a gallop over the downs at sunrise."

"Then there's Mr. Egerton."

"He's grey and greedy," said her mistress. "He over-feeds his body and starves his soul."

"At least he has got a character for ——"

"The sooner he loses it the better."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" said the bewildered maid, "do you never intend to marry *anybody*?"

"I would marry any man to-morrow if I thought he loved me for myself alone; but, unfortunately, everybody knows I'm rich."

Before the conversation ended, it was suggested that Miss Devereux should go to Wine-Office-court and consult the wise man who had so strangely predicted the case between Flora and her lover. After much hesitation and long consulting together, mistress and maid resolved to pay a visit to the Egyptian and have their horoscopes cast. Miss Devereux wrote, as she had been told it was necessary to do, and made an appointment for the following day.

In great trepidation the two girls started on foot for Wine-Office-court. Arrived there, they proceeded, according to the instructions they had

received, up the stairs to a room on the second floor. There they found a very old, venerable man, with long grey hair, grizzled beard, and fantastic gown of dark blue cloth, girdled in at the waist. He was poring over some large volumes, written in strange characters. A quaint vase of incense was burning close by ; but, apart from that, there was nothing peculiar about the room, and there was no attempt at twilight mystery, for it was broad daylight, and the sunshine streamed freely in at the uncurtained window. The old man seemed so enfeebled by age that it was with difficulty he rose to receive them; but it seemed as though the spirit had grown brighter as the body sank into decay, for a pair of keen grey eyes gleamed like luminous lamps beneath the bushy brows. His voice was soft and melodious, and had none of the harsh grating or watery weakness of age. He startled the girls by his knowledge of some of the hidden secrets of their past lives, and predicted strange things for the future. Miss Devereux was to meet her fate on the occasion of her leaving some place of worship or amusement.

The girls were no sooner out of sight and hearing than the wise man's wig was flung off, his robe flung aside, and Samuel Foote's agile form and twinkling grey eyes appeared from beneath the venerable disguise; and at the same moment Poyntz made his appearance from the adjoining room, and both indulged in a hearty laugh at what they considered "un fait accompli."

The prediction was not to be carried out too speedily. The seed of expectation sown in the girl's mind was to have time to grow into a feverish longing. Miss Devereux haunted all places of public amusement, and was most devoted to her religious exercises; still nothing came of it, and she began to despair of the fulfilment of the wise man's prophecy.

One morning as she was passing out of the great door of Westminster Abbey, a violent shower of rain came on, and a gentleman of prepossessing manners and appearance—in fact, he was no other than Jack Poyntz—stepped forward and held his umbrella over as she passed out to her carriage. Seeing that it was an open one, he insisted on her retaining the umbrella, and, having obtained her address, received permission to call for it in the afternoon.

With a beating heart Miss Devereux returned home. Here was the prediction about to be verified at last! A romance in real life commenced from that moment, and ended in a prosaic though fashionably-attended marriage at St. Sepulchre's Church in the City.

The lawyers had arranged the lady's fortune satisfactorily to both parties concerned ; but, alas ! before the honeymoon had waned the matrimonial aspect clouded. Thanks to his capacity for acting, Mr. Foote had arranged matters from the first meeting, when he had waylaid the unconscious Flora, and he had managed the whole sequence of events which ended at the altar. At the end of the month he demanded his ten per cent. of the lady's fortune, according to agreement. Poyntz refused to pay. Foote was resolute, and went to law ; hence arose a tedious process of litigation, which ended in a verdict for Foote, and Poyntz was compelled to pay the money. However dishonourable was the transaction, and redounding little to the credit of either, the monetary engagement was made, and had to be carried out. There was a general *exposé* of the whole affair, which made a great scandal, and for a time was the talk of the town.

En Passant.

THE late Mrs. Adelaide Kemble Sartoris, when she was a young lady, once sang at a private entertainment in Paris, where among her audience was Mr. Charles Sumner. He afterwards wrote to Mr. G. S. Hillard of Miss Kemble's singing on this occasion : " You know that I am no judge of music, but still I have a heart and pulses which throb under manifestations of human feeling. Her music affected me deeply, and I cannot describe to you how much impressed was the beautiful and crowded circle by which she was surrounded, who interrupted her at every pause by a gush of ' bravos.' She was a singing Fanny Kemble."

THE death of Baron Taylor removes a conspicuous figure from the literary and artistic world. He was born at Brussels in 1789, his father being English and his mother Dutch. The Revolution almost ruined his parents, who, however, contrived to give him a good education in Paris. In his boyhood he earned some money by illustrating books and contributing to the press. In 1813 he served in the National Guard, but while doing so managed to write four or five plays, one of which, *Bertram*, proved very successful. His military career closed with the Spanish campaign of 1823, in which he displayed considerable bravery. In the meantime he had travelled a good deal in Europe and written his *Voyages Pittoresques*. In 1825, when the fortunes of the Comédie Française were at a low ebb, he was appointed administrator of that theatre, and in less than five years restored it to prosperity and influence. To him we owe the revival of *Le Mariage de Figaro* and the production of *Hernani* and *Marion Delorme*. In 1830, he was sent by the Government to Egypt, and from that time down to his death was occupied in fulfilling public duties or with works of benevolence. He was the founder of many provident societies, including that of the theatrical profession, for which he always manifested a strong regard. " You know," M. Hugo once said to him, " that you were to a great extent a collaborator with me in *Hernani*." " Yes," was the reply, " in the quality of midwife."

MR. JOHN McCULLOUGH has been telling a journalistic friend some secrets. He says there are but three tragic actors in the United States—Mr. Booth, Mr. Barrett and himself. The taste has not declined for this kind of acting, but the new actors are too indolent and hasty for money to study Shaksperean parts. Mr. Edwin Booth has made more money than any human being who ever played Shakspere. He is an excellent actor, but, like all men who get to the top round of the profession, receives more criticism than he now deserves. This business of criticism, said Mr. McCullough, " is peculiar. There are men now writing me up with sincere enthusiasm who will in a few years hence, if I have better luck, make up their minds that they had better begin to pull me down. This is the only trouble with Booth. He has had the largest following and the best class of support of any person on the stage in England or America. He has improved, but, of course, there will be pauses and reactions in every career. It is the same with Dion Boucicault. I have seen recently a dozen or twenty references to him as played out. The fact is, he has become wealthy, and does not have at the moment the spur of necessity to make him work. His ambition, however, like his imagination, moves onward towards new conquest." Referring to dramatic criticism in the press of New York, Mr. McCullough said that, as a general rule, there was little reliance to be placed on it. " There is a great opportunity," he remarked, " for some high-minded critic, such as John Oxenford. The New York

theatres and the dramatic profession in the aggregate give enormous sums of money to the press, and I am afraid the commercial influence of the advertising operates against judicial notices of the drama."

IN his life of Theophile Gautier, M. Bergerat tells us that the French poet-novelist had the blood of kings in his veins. Like Johnson, he was possessed by the fear of death which sometimes haunts men of great physical strength and courage. Among the modern inventions which he detested was the custom of *reportage*, the industry of interviewers and of the spies of the tattling newspapers. His splendid flow of talk was checked in general society by the fear of seeing his good things in the *Figaro* next morning. A newspaper gossip hastened his decease. He had long been ill, but his relations concealed from him the nature of his complaint. They did their best to mystify the newspaper people who came with their inquiries, and to keep newspapers out of the poet's sight. One unlucky morning he read in a column of twaddle that "Theophile Gautier has heart disease," and this manner of conveying the truth really hastened his end. He believed in omens and warnings, in the danger of enterprises begun on Friday, in the perils that environ people who number thirteen at dinner, in the mischief that attends the spilling of salt. His romance of *Jettatura* does not exaggerate the ardour of his belief in the evil eye. He could never even mention M. Offenbach, who passed for being a *jettatore*, without making the signs which are supposed to act as lightning-conductors and to carry off the streams of evil.

Two stories—probably apocryphal—of Mdlle. Bernhardt. A gentleman in the audience had one night the exceedingly bad taste to persistently hiss her. She found out his address, called at his house, and had an interview all alone with him. Then and there she told him it was always her endeavour conscientiously to do her duty as a histrionic artist and to please her public; that she regretted anything like failure in that duty, and that she should feel greatly obliged if he would kindly point out her defects in order that she might correct them. This conduct won for her another passionate admirer.

ANOTHER day she read in a certain Parisian paper the statement that her hair was false and her teeth were far too good to be genuine. Next day the dramatic critic was amazed to behold a lady dash into his room and let down her hair in his presence. "Pull it!" she exclaimed, as she placed a luxuriant tress in one of his hands. "Is this real hair or not?" "Certainly, certainly," stammered the critic. Catching hold of his other hand, she opened her mouth—but happily not to bite—and made him finger her teeth. "Are these false?" cried the lady. "No, they are the most beautiful real teeth I ever beheld in my life," declared the terrified victim, who would willingly have sworn that black was white if it would have given his visitor the least satisfaction. "I am Sarah Bernhardt," proclaimed the lady, with as much serenity as she could possibly put into her voice, and the wretched critic made up his mind for the worst. He, too, has since become one of her most devoted vassals.

THE recent addition of Mr. Forbes Robertson's admirable portrait of the late Mr. Phelps to the Garrick Club collection of theatrical portraits has caused additional value to be attached to the curiously life-like wax busts of that admirable actor, of which about a dozen are known to exist. Few of the possessors, Mr. Blanchard writes, are probably aware that these faithful likenesses of Mr. Phelps were executed by Mr. Howe, a flute-player in the orchestra of Sadler's Wells, whose ingenuity as a modeller used to be exercised while the play was proceeding on the stage and the actor stood before him. For eighteen years this industrious musician and modeller kept his place in the orchestra through the whole evening, devoting himself to art when the rest of the band went out to refreshment, and in these intervals of well-employed leisure he contrived to produce a series of busts and statuettes of many actors and actresses of note.

THE late Miss Cushman's residence at Newport is one of the most quaintly-furnished villas in that place. Several years before her death she purchased a lot of antique furniture known as the "Jarvis" collection, and had it put into the house she occupied in Rome. Many times she conceived the idea of sending the furniture to America, but her friends always dissuaded her, telling her it was far too old to stand the jars of travelling. At last she followed her own inclinations, and the old furniture was shipped to America. It had scarcely arrived, however, before her death occurred, and it was not unpacked till she had been many months in the grave. Now the whole collection stands in the house she left by will to her nephew. It is curious enough to fill the heart of the bric-a-brac hunter with envy. The handles to the drawers are old shields, and the locks intricate monograms. In the old desk hidden compartments are continually being discovered ; but it cracks. Let the weather be warm or let it be cold, this queer old furniture keeps up the weirdest kinds of "bumpings." Sometimes whole panels tumble out, and its owners are terribly afraid they will not be able to keep it many years longer.

HERE is a hint to those fair ones who wish, but know not how, to correct an ungraceful walk. An English lady, an acquaintance of M. Ingrès, the French painter, had a most awkward gait. The gentleman recommended her daily to take a long walk, balancing meanwhile on her head a pitcher of water. This he said would give the true poise to the figure, necessitate the upright carriage of the head, and cause her to have a smooth, firm step. An eminent French actor who prepares young girls for the stage has taken the painter's hint, and his pupils every day at a certain time have to walk about with vessels of water on their heads.

THE question as to the decoration of French actors, on which we made some remarks a month or two ago, is pointedly referred to in the Palais-Royal piece, *La Revue trop tôt*. One of the personages says :—

—On ne peut vraiment
Faire porter une croix par devant
A qui reçoit du bâton par derrière !

During the last rehearsal of the piece M. Coquelin ainé presented himself at the Palais-Royal. "Authors," he angrily said, "lived on the actors, that the company had no right to make fun of the decoration of comedians. In his opinion the artists of the Palais-Royal ought to resign rather than consent to play in a piece in which their dignity was thus attacked." No change, however, was made in the text.

"THE dead ride fast," says Burger, in one of his ballads. "The dead live long" is an old saying in many parts of England. It is to be hoped that the latter assertion may be amply carried out in the case of Mr. Benjamin Webster. The fact is not generally known, that a very few years ago, this esteemed actor was "laid out" for dead. His doctor, and two of his intimate theatrical associates were present at his "last moments." "It is all over now," said the doctor, as he covered the "corpse" with a sheet. The dawn of "life after death" may be told in Mr. Webster's own words. "Well, sir ! I felt a queer, suffocating sensation ; something was over my face, I snatched away the sheet, for such it was. I was alone, but there was a light in the room, so I got out of bed and put on my dressing-gown and slippers, and went down into the parlour. There, sir, sat my theatrical friends, drinking whisky and water, *my whisky, sir !* and saying, 'Well, poor old Ben's gone at last !' 'Am I ?' said I. You may guess what a turn the fellows had ! But I was not going to let off the doctor, you know. We guess'd that he hadn't gone far. I dressed fully, and, true enough, we found him at a neighbouring pot-house, sitting with his back to the door, and eating tripe and onions ; tripe and onions, sir ! with a gin bottle by his side, quite comfortable. 'A pretty fellow you are, to send me out of the world, willy-nilly,' I shouted. You should have seen him.

He started up as if he were shot. We all thought he was going off in a fit, then and there, instead of me ; he took me for a ghost ! I don't think he'll send people to their graves in a hurry again !" Such was the "death and life" of Mr. Benjamin Webster. *Vivent les morts !*

GREAT expectations, the *Musical World* says, are founded on M. Carvalho's new tenor, M. Mouliérat, who is to make his first bow at the Opéra-Comique in Félicien David's *Perle du Brésil*, and who, according to Emilien Paccini, owes his good fortune to a lucky chance. Four years ago the young artist served in the 18th Chasseurs. During a review held at Longchamps by Marshal MacMahon a short time was allowed the troops for rest and refreshment. Profiting by the fact, the 46th Line Regiment resolved to give the 18th Chasseurs, with whom they were brigaded, a treat in the shape of a vocal performance by a trumpeter of whose powers they were exceedingly proud. After listening to the trumpeter, who was applauded to the echo, a corporal of the 18th observed : "Oh, we've a fellow who can beat him hollow—a regular tip-topper." Hereupon the tip-topper was fetched, and, on hearing that a display of his singing capabilities would oblige, at once struck up the patriotic song of "Alsace-Lorraine." General Bocher, who commanded the brigade and happened to be passing, stopped to listen. When the song was over he complimented the young trooper, and requested him to call the next morning at the Ecole Militaire. Mouliérat, for it was he, was punctual to a second; and, after hearing him again, the General gave him a letter to M. Gresset, professor at the Conservatory, who introduced him to M. Ambroise Thomas. That gentleman gave orders that the military warbler should be admitted at once as a pupil, the upshot being that, after three years of hard study, the *ci-devant* trooper will shortly come out as a leading member of the second lyric theatre in France.

IN our last issue allusion was made to a quarrel between Mr. Fechter and Mr. Wallack. How it arose is shown by the following correspondence. Mr. Fechter had sent the part of Don Salluste to Mr. Wallack :—" My dear Fechter, I have received the play and do not like the part of Don Salluste at all. I would rather not play it. Yours truly, J. W. WALLACK." " My dear Wallack, I sent you the part of Don Salluste to study, not to judge. I should as soon think of asking your permission to cast you as Joseph Surface as Don Salluste. I beg of you to reconsider your note and accept the part, or your services will be useless here and your engagement at an end this very week. I consider Don Salluste the best part in the play, and would much rather act it than Ruy Blas. If you say so we will alternate the parts. . . . And I am, my dear Wallack, yours truly, C. FECHTER." " Sir, I consider that no other prefix is necessary after your letter of this date. . . . I decline further correspondence of any nature with you. . . . Yours truly, J. W. WALLACK."

MADAME JEANNE GRANIER, it appears, is something of a wit. *Triboulet* relates that once when she was quite a child she went out with her mother to hunt for an apartment. They came to a house, and on inquiring they found that the price and the arrangement suited. The concierge, who was dining, did not deign to turn round from the table to answer their questions. At last, when Mamma Granier asked to be allowed to visit the rooms, the old Cerberus turned round, with his mouth full, and, noting their modest appearance, said in a brutal tone : " Mais, au moins, c'est pour des gens bien ?" " Oh ! très bien, très bien," replied Jeanne, impatiently, " tout ce qu'il y a de bien, ce sont d'anciens concierges !"

MADAME SALOMAN recently died at Harzburg, Brunswick. A native of Gothenburg, she was educated for the lyric stage by Manuel Garcia, and in 1839 made her *début* at the Théâtre des Italiens, Paris. During the next twenty years she appeared in England and other countries. In 1859, after marrying Siegfried Saloman, she became a leader of singing at St. Petersburg. The death is also

announced of M. Roger, the once well-known tenor of the Paris Opéra-Comique. He was the original representative of Horace in *Le Domino Noir* and Jean de Leyde in the *Prophète*, and twice appeared at Covent Garden. Some years ago, having lost an arm through a gun accident, he withdrew from the stage, and at the time of his death was a professor at the Conservatoire. Shirley Henry France, who died recently at Boston, after an illness of two years, the effect of a sun-stroke, was well known as a utility actor and as a brave soldier during the civil war; also as the husband of Rachel Noah, the actress. Mr. France was a native of London, and came of a theatrical family. He was brought as an infant to New York, and began his profession at the foot of the ladder.

THEY were playing *Buffalo Bill* at the Denver Opera-house. One of the tableaux was the Mountain Meadow massacre, illuminated by glaring coloured flames. Some one surreptitiously mingled a quantity of red pepper with the material for producing tinted flame, and the mixture sputtered, flashed, splashed, sparkled, hissed, crackled, and flew in fiery, blistering showers over the hands and faces of the dead, whose vitality was restored in a miraculously natural manner. One of the murdered women who lay upon her back, dead as a door-nail, revived with a startling suddenness; other corpses writhed, rolled, flopped, howled, and groaned.

THE *Rosemonde*, of Alfieri, was lately played at a matinée in Paris. The austere severity of this and other plays from the same pen, especially as regards the number of personages, used to excite ridicule in Italy, and a wicked parody of his style was once produced under the title of *The Death of Socrates*. There were but three characters—Socrates, Xantippe, and Plato. There is not a word too many, and when Socrates expires, murmuring, “I die,” all that Plato says is, “O, my master.”

Hamlet seems to be very popular in Russia; no fewer than eight scholarly translations of the tragedy have been published there:—Sumarokoff 1748, Viskovatz 1811, Stroeff, Ivantsoff, and Popoff in 1813, Vrontchenko 1828, Polevoy 1837, Kronberg 1844, Zagulaeff 1861, and Danilovsky 1877.

M. ZOLA had a youth of misery. After the death of his father, a distinguished civil engineer, the boy and his mother went to Paris, where they suffered greatly from poverty. Emile once had to pawn his coat to get a breakfast.

MADAME MODJESKA has found an enthusiastic admirer in Mr. Winter. “In herself a vision of grace; in the quality of her genius most spiritual and sympathetic; in all the business of her profession thoroughly accomplished and proficient; and, as to the spirit of her proceedings, loftily ambitious, intellectual, and pure, this actress,” he writes, “is the foremost representative of the best capability and power of the stage.”

THE following is a list of the *doyens* of the Comédie Française since the foundation of the theatre:—Molière, 1658-1673; La Grange, 1673-1692; Guérin, 1692-1717; La Thorillière, 1717-1731; Dangeville, 1731-1740; Quinault-Dufresne, 1740-1741; Legrand, 1741-1758; La Thorillière (Fr.-M.), 1758-1759; Armand, 1759-1765; Bonneval, 1765-1773; Le Kain, 1773-1778; Bellecourt, 1778-1778; Préville, 1778-1786; Molé, 1786-1802; Monvel, 1802-1806; Dugazon, 1806-1809; Fleury, 1809-1818; Saint Fal, 1818-1824; Talmia, 1824-1826; Baptiste ainé, 1826-1828; Armand, 1828-1830; Michelot, 1830-1831; Cartagny, 1831-1831; Monrose, 1831-1842; Samson, 1842-1863; Geffroy, 1863-1865; Regnier, 1865-1871; Leroux, 1871-1873; Got, 1873.

At the Play.

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IN LONDON.

IT is to be regretted for the sake both of Miss Genevieve Ward and of the public that she did not chance to produce Messrs. Herman Merivale and F. C. Grove's capital play, *Forget-Me-Not*, at the commencement instead of the close of her brief season at the Lyceum. Nowadays, when playgoing London is so large it takes some time to confirm amongst the many the favourable impression of the few, and *Forget-Me-Not* has not had the full chace to which it is honestly entitled by its merits. There can, however, be little doubt that if it be as well acted in the provinces as it was in town it will speedily secure great popularity. *Forget-Me-Not* has a sound and interesting plot, dealing as it does with a prolonged social duel between well-armed vice and comparatively defenceless virtue. A strong motive is provided, both for the overbearing intrusion of the disreputable Stephanie Marchioness de Mohrivart upon her widowed daughter-in-law, and for the anxiety of that young lady's sister and of her friend, Sir Horace Welby, to get rid of so contaminating a presence. The hold which Stephanie has upon her family connections is based upon her power according to the French legal code of annulling the marriage of her deceased son, and the countermine which is sprung against her by Welby in the last act is arranged with much skill to sustain the dramatic effect previously produced. The plot is thus as simple as it is forcible, and while it suggests situations full of melodramatic vigour, it is not lacking in opportunities for scenes of a less sombre order. The dialogue, albeit occasionally redundant, especially in the first act, is nervous and interesting, and in all essential features the new play is one of the best and most promising original works that have been submitted to London playgoers for a long time. Its great attraction for the actress to whom its production was due was doubtless found in the special capabilities of its leading character, under treatment at once vigorous and polished, and it may at once be said that Miss Ward was able to completely justify her choice both of rôle and of drama. The several phases of the cruel, crafty woman's character, the remains of her old powers of blandishment, and the air of the *demi-monde*—to use the word in its true sense—to which the ex-gambling-house-keeper belongs, are depicted with easy art; whilst in the stronger scenes already referred to she displays an amount of power possessed by few indeed of our actresses. Mr. Forbes Robertson's important share of the performance in the trying part of Sir Horace Welby showed him to have not only sympathetic spirit, but a *finesse* with which he has not before been credited, and except for the Corsican Barrato of Mr. F. Tyars, the rest of the characters were played appropriately and with judgment, praisespecially deserved by Miss Louise Willes as the suffering heroine. On the whole, though *Forget-Me-Not* has minor defects, which

might easily be magnified into faults by those who do not care for the drama, of plot and action, it is a work upon which its authors are to be heartily congratulated, the one upon his invention, and the other upon his manipulation of the subject for the practical purposes of the stage. Collaboration such as theirs, which is too seldom employed by our playwrights, should in the future bring forth valuable results.

THE return of Mr. Irving, evidently much invigorated by his sensibly-employed holiday, to the Lyceum was marked by the performance of *The Bells* and the production of a neat and amusing comedietta by Mr. A. W. Pinero. Of the former it need only be said that the marvellous study of morbid nature has lost none of its hold upon its spectators, whom it retains spell-bound by its terrible power. Mr. Pinero's comedietta which, so far as its incidents are concerned, is decidedly farcical, fulfils its modest purpose excellently. It shows us how *Daisy's Escape* from an ill-chosen bridegroom, with whom she is foolishly eloping for want of something better to do, is accomplished in the nick of time. *Daisy White* has run away in haste with Mr. Augustus Caddel, and before the journey is over she repents at leisure her unaccountable choice of a future husband who is vulgar, rude, and ill-tempered. The conduct of the ill-matched couple and their conversation are both made very diverting, and as the trifle is briskly played by all concerned, it is a decided success. Mr. Pinero himself makes the most of Mr. Caddel's eccentricities, Miss Alma Murray is a very graceful Daisy, and Mr. F. Cooper is a young lover who shows an unusual combination of ease and earnestness.

THOUGH everyone will wish well to Mr. Wilson Barrett in his endeavour to manage the Court Theatre in the really artistic spirit by which Mr. Hare raised this theatre to its high position, few will be able to conscientiously congratulate him upon the opening step of his undertaking. *Fernande*, as adapted by Mr. Sutherland-Edwards, was not a very great success when it was played in October, 1870, by a cast which included Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mrs. John Wood, and Mr. Lionel Brough, and it could not be judiciously relied upon to do much better at the Court Theatre with a cast, upon the whole, decidedly inferior. In the first place it is a play full of faults, for Mr. Edwards has shown little skill in presenting his necessary alterations of the plot from injuring the force of its motive. Its opening act is dull and almost redundant, and its dialogue is commonplace from first to last. In the second place the one important rôle of the drama, the character upon which the whole interest depends, is unhappily quite unsuited to the actress who undertakes it. Miss Heath is a sound, though stagey actress, of a *passé* school, and has often been seen to advantage in heavy melodramatic parts; but in *Clotilde* she is utterly out of place. She has not the light touch necessary for the comedy which overlies the tragic import of *Clotilde's* great scenes; she fails to suggest the woman who would either conceive or carry out such a plot as that by which André becomes the husband of Fernande. Her occasional expressions of really strong emotion are beside the mark, and her simulated light-heartedness is almost grotesque. In *Fernande*, as some time since in *Elfinella*, a charming poem which did not deserve to miss its mark, Miss Heath injures something beyond her well-won reputation by her mistaken

estimate of her own capabilities. For the rest Miss Amy Roselle shows a sprightly comedy-humour as the jealous Georgette, so amusingly played by Mrs. John Wood in days gone by; Mr. Coghlan, whom we could have wished to see under more favourable circumstances on his welcome return to England, is of course an admirable André; and Mr. Wilson-Barrett as Pomerol at once takes his position as a comedian of tact and well-balanced force. For the Fernande of Miss Rosa Kenney little that is favourable can be said, as the young actress has, oddly enough, so old a manner as to miss the girlish heroine's individuality altogether. Mr. Anson is an admirable Jarbi, dry, fresh, and distinct in his humour; and Mr. Edward Price unintentionally burlesques the brutality of a Brocassin, who would, we fancy, have attracted few victims to his gaming-table. The mounting of the piece is chiefly distinguished by good intention, for Clotilde's Japanese boudoir, on which so much pains and colour have been lavished, is surely an apartment which suggests that elaborate stage-decoration has now passed the limits alike of fitness and taste.

For the second time since its production, nine years ago, Mr. Albery's first and best comedy, *Two Roses*, is now revived at the Vaudeville. A third observation of the play only confirms the belief that its popularity is deserved by its intrinsic merits. It is a delightful play, which gives opportunities of distinction to the representatives of most of its characters. Mr. Thorne's Caleb Deeeeie alone remains to recall the original cast, and, like Mr. James's racy Mr. Jenkins, so clever a variation upon the performance of Mr. Honey, it is full of real artistic merit. The chief new points deserving of note in the representation are in the Digby Grant of Mr. H. Howe, and the Jaek Wyatt of Mr. W. Herbert, for the Lottie of Miss Illington is only a well-intentioned blunder. Mr. Howe is of course heavily handicapped in following Mr. Irving in the strongly-marked character of Digby Grant; but in spite of the conventionality which in modern comedy this trustworthy actor never quite throws off, he gives a telling copy of a most striking sketch. Mr. W. Herbert gives a sympathetic charm to Jaek Wyatt, such as causes him to follow poor H. J. Montague without suggesting any sad contrast, and to have done this is to have done much. Another revival here has been that of *Our Domestics*, an old Strand adaptation by Mr. F. Hay, in which Messrs. James and Thorne play their original parts with their original humour, and give us most amusing sketches of our fashionable servants' peculiarities. Mr. James's Francis might have stepped out of the "Pickwick Papers."

By *Handsome Hernani*, the latest new burlesque at the Gaiety, little comment is needed. The obvious points of Victor Hugo's play and of its performance by Madame Sarah Bernhardt and M. Mounet-Sully have, doubtless for excellent reasons, been disregarded by Mr. Byron, who has chosen others, which give us an extravaganza neither better nor worse than others of its kind. Mr. Terry, who would have made a very funny brigand-lover is a quaint Ruy Gomes, whose songs in ridicule of old Castilian pride are the wittiest things in the play. Miss Farren makes of Hernani a young prince very like the other young prinees whom she has presented in previous burlesques, and Miss Kate Vaughan is, or was on the occasion of our visit to

the Gaiety, a Dona Sol too languid to fascinate except by her graceful abstention from song and dance. The only skit upon the performance of the Comédie Française is the Don Carlos of Mr. Royce, always a humorous and hard-working player. *Handsome Hernani* seems to contain the elements best beloved by the patrons of the Gaiety, but it displays little humorous invention and no power of caricature on the part of its author.

THE revival of Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem* at the Imperial Theatre is one of the most interesting of the experiments in this direction which have recently been made. It is a typical work of its period, is full of dramatic vitality, and is well worth the study which a capable representation on the stage can alone make possible. Written on the death-bed of its author, who did not live through its first run at the Haymarket in 1707, it is nevertheless full of happy animation in its intrigue, which, full-flavoured though it is, contrasts in its morality very favourably with the contemporary works of Wycherly and Vanbrugh. Its modification in its present arrangement cannot be discussed hastily, and we may content ourselves with noting the broad features of its representation at the Imperial. First, then, we note the dainty art of Miss Litton's Mrs. Sullen, which catches the tone of the by-gone age more happily than does the Dorinda of Miss Meyrick. Mr. Lionel Brough is probably the only comedian of the day capable of worthily following the famous Scrubs of Bannister at Drury Lane and of Munden and Keeley at Covent Garden. His humour has the true rich flavour about it, and is here simply invaluable. Celebrated Archers of days gone by were Elliston and Garrick and C. Keinble, whose readings of the part must have differed widely. That of Mr. W. Farren is excellent in style, but somewhat deficient in youthful buoyancy, and is little helped by the dull and colourless Aimwell of Mr. Edgar. Miss Addison is a bright and piquante Cherry, her repetition of "Love's Catechism" being perfect in delivery. Mrs. Sterling, who spoke effectively, if stagily, Mr. Clement Scott's well-written prologue, is naturally at home as Lady Bountiful, and with Mr. Brough helps greatly to give the breadth of tone needed for comedy of this type. Admirably dressed, especially by the ladies, with Miss Litton at their head, the representation gives a most interesting picture of the period, and the performance inaugurates most successfully a series of revivals which promises much alike to playgoer and to students. That Miss Litton should have succeeded as she has is much; that the taste of the day should encourage such an undertaking is still more.

IN THE PROVINCES.

DURING the last month several new pieces were produced. The first of these, an original play from the pen of Mr. Val Prinsep, called *Mons. le Duc* has been very favourably received. A brief detail of the plot may not prove uninteresting. The Duke de Richelieu, for whom there is no virtue in woman, is found betting on a game being played by his choice companions. Presently there enters Le Chevalier, an old libertine, who introduces to the Duke his companion the Count de la Roque, from

Dauphiné. The Count declares his belief in woman's virtue ; this leads to an argument between him and the Duke, when the latter produces a letter from a young lady of noble birth, a friendless orphan, who implores his protection. Richelieu regards the letter as an offer from the girl to sell herself to him, and he wagers 500 louis with the Count that he will persuade her to sup with him and his companions in vice that night. The girl, he tells them, is on her way to him now, and then enters the maid to announce that mademoiselle has arrived. All retire except Richelieu, who immediately tries to persuade the girl to stop, but in vain. At the last moment she gives him a letter from her dead mother, by which Richelieu is informed that the orphan Marguerite is his own daughter. This piece was produced on the 28th of August at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, with Mr. Hare as the Duke, and Miss Grahame as Marguerite. Mr. Hare's acting may be pronounced a most finished and successful sketch. Mr. Terriss played the Count with much judgment. Mr. Hare, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, afterwards proceeded to Liverpool and Birmingham, where *The Ladies' Battle*, *A Quiet Rubber*, *A Scrap of Paper*, and *The Queen's Shilling* were produced with the usual success. Speaking of Mrs. Kendal as the Countess in *The Ladies' Battle*, the *Courier* says,—“Her impersonation was perfection itself. Archness and piquancy were the most prominent characteristics of her acting, but indications of passion and pathos were markedly apparent where opportunities for their display were afforded.”

THE second piece, entitled *Butterfly*, is an adaptation by Mrs. Comyns Carr of *Frou-Frou*. It was first produced in Glasgow on the 12th of last month with Miss Ellen Terry in the principal part. It was again played on the 19th at Liverpool. “We cannot find words,” says the *Post* of that town, “to express the charm with which Miss Terry, than whom there is no more tender or graceful actress on the British stage, invests the character of Butterfly, but those who can appreciate versatility of acting should see her play the part, and then ask themselves the question, ‘Could anyone do it better?’ She was most ably supported by Mr. Charles Kelly and Miss Fanny Pitt, whose acting greatly contributed to the success of the piece.” The same paper speaking of *New Men and Old Acres* says: “It is seldom that such a piece is rendered with such perfection as that which the leading members of the cast succeeded in achieving. There is only one word which can adequately describe Miss Terry’s personation of Lilian Vavasour, and that word is perfection. Natural and graceful in expression, with an inexhaustible vivacity, she maintains an unbroken spell, which is only deepened by each fresh stroke of humour and girlish outburst of sentiment, accompanied by a bewitching artillery of attitude and expression. The acting of Mr. Charles Kelly as Mr. Brown, the quiet, self-possessed man of business, was excellent in the extreme.” Miss Terry afterwards appeared as Dora in Mr. Charles Reade’s drama of that name, which was produced during her last engagement in Liverpool, and now, as then, succeeded by her graceful and pathetic acting of the rough-hearted farmer’s niece in sensibly affecting the audience.

MISS NEILSON appeared in Manchester and Birmingham immediately prior to her departure for America. “The extreme cordiality with which

her reappearance was welcomed after what many doubtless think too long an absence," says the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, "afforded a further proof, if one were wanting, that the popularity of this most gifted actress increases with each succeeding visit. It is no great tax upon our memories to call to mind her first appearance here when but a delicate, sensitive girl she revealed an incipient power which unmistakeably shadowed forth a brilliant future. Her ripened intellect and maturity of style have enabled her to take a position in the embodiment of Shaksperean heroines which cannot be challenged by any living actress. Her Juliet has not a rival upon the stage; her vivacious, bantering, impulsive Rosalind is unsurpassed; and such perfect studies as her Viola, Beatrice, and Isabella have further enriched her repertory. It speaks well for her early judgment that the part in which she was first identified should afterwards have proved her most popular assumption. Long and diligent study has enabled her to realize an ideal Juliet, sweetly simple and tender, yet ardently devoted and full of noble impulse, whose guileless and confiding love contrasts so powerfully with her self-sacrificing heroism, the glowing picturesqueness, in fact, of whose character is bound up in its paradoxes and contradictions. Where so many actresses have failed, Miss Neilson has most succeeded. The soft and gentle emotions of love and grief, the ready outbursts of girlish affection are as effective in their way as the vivid power of the later scenes. The secret of Miss Neilson's success in this most difficult part is that throughout she holds its tragical aspect in subjection to the beautiful. In *A's You Like It* the first awakening of her affection for Orlando at the time of the wrestling-match was a most finished piece of acting; the glances she bestowed upon him, the sweetness of the tones in which she spoke, the anxiety she displayed on his behalf during the contest, and finally, her evident reluctance to leave his presence, and the backward glances she bestowed upon him, were all given with an ease and tenderness that clearly testified to the genius of the actress. Julia, as she acts it, is a revelation of almost every phase of womanly nature. First, the simple, innocent country girl, then the giddy, capricious maiden, in whom the change from rustic life to the delights of town has banished guileless simplicity and substituted wayward frivolity—so much so that she quarrels with her ardent lover; then the proud maiden with wounded dignity stung to madness by a lover's affront, her devouring pride struggling for mastery with the strongest impulses of love; and finally the lofty-minded, noble woman who refuses to lend herself to a false attachment—these are by no means all the transitions which make the assumption an exceedingly trying one, though when undertaken by an artist like Miss Neilson, the character is one of kaleidoscopic brilliancy."

A NEW one-act operetta called *A Gay Cavalier*, the words by Mr. Ernest Cuthbert, and the music by Mr. Arthur A. Nicholson, was produced at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, on the 15th ult. The music is pleasing, but the libretto is rather poor, and had it not been for the good singing and sprightly acting of Miss Lucy Franklin, the piece would have proved a failure. The plot is as follows:—A Royalist, Sir Digby Chick, to save his estates, renounces his polities. Lady Chick's brother, a fugitive cavalier, writes to his sister, saying that he will seek the

protection of her roof that night. The letter is unsigned, and Sir Digby accidentally seeing it, thinks that his wife has a lover. Resolved to sift the matter to the bottom, he pretends that he is going a journey, but returns unexpectedly. His wife instructs her maid Catherine (Miss Lucy Franklein) to dress herself as a gay cavalier, and to make love to her. So well does she play the part that Sir Digby Chick is deceived, and advancing with drawn sword, commands the supposed cavalier to draw. The real state of the case is then explained, and thus the operetta ends. *The Tempest* was revived at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, early in the month, though not, of course, upon an adequate scale. Mr. Vandenhoff was excellent as *Prospero*. Miss Fowler achieved much success at Bradford, Leeds, and York in *Scandal* and *Nell Gwynne*; and Miss Soldene appeared to advantage at Edinburgh as *Carmen*. Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Swanborough, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, and the *Proof*, *Caste*, and Mr. Carl Rosa's companies were also on tour.

IN PARIS.

IN the course of the month a good deal of activity was observable in the theatrical world here. Many of the theatres which have been closed during the summer reopened their doors, and several pieces have been either produced or revived. The most important of the novelties, perhaps, was a three-act comedy, by M. Paul Ferrier, *Les Ilotes de Pithiviers*, brought out at the Gymnase. M. Mauvernay, a young notaire, is given to dissipation, and his father-in-law plunges into the vortex of pleasure in the hope that by doing so he might make him ashamed of his ways. The meaning of the title of the play will now be apparent; the helots of Sparta were permitted to get drunk in order to convey a solemn warning to the rising generation as to the evil effects of intemperance. It unfortunately happens that the father-in-law takes too kindly to fast life, and before long the son-in-law finds it necessary to assume the character of censor himself. The dialogue is very pleasing, but the incidents are not strong enough to bear the weight of three acts, and the play, although likely to remain on the bills for some weeks, can hardly be regarded as very successful. *La Muette de Portici* was revived at the Opéra with great splendour, and has been well received. Originally produced in 1828, just as the war between the classic and romantic schools was beginning, this piece, though not of the first order of merit, acquired a lasting hold of the stage, and will always hold a prominent place among Auber's works. The cast for the present revival is in all respects satisfactory, Masaniello being represented by M. Villaret, Pietro by M. Lassalle, and Elvire by Mdlle. Daram. The Châtelet is relying upon the anxiously-expected *Venus Noire* of M. Belot, which may be roughly described as less a drama than an illustration of a journey into Central Africa,—a spectacle of the kind introduced by M. Jules Verne. M. de Guéran, an African traveller, is a prisoner at the Court of the Black Venus; his wife comes from France to rescue him, and after a series of exciting adventures succeeds in

doing so. M. Dumaine and Madame Deshayes head the east. Another novelty at the Gymnase is a one-act comedy, *Celle qu'on n'épouse pas*, the story of which turns upon the fortunes of a young man who gives up his family for the sake of a grisette, but is eventually prevailed upon to marry a girl of the class indicated in the title of the piece. At the Bouffes we have an opera comique entitled *Panurge*, founded upon the third book of *Pantagruel*. The music is by M. Hervé, and the book by MM. Gastineau and Clairville. The authors have not been unsuccessful in their attempt to throw a certain Rabelaisian humour over the piece, and the music is in the composer's best manner. *L'Assommoir* was revived at the Ambigu, M. Marais representing Coupeau with marked force, and pretty Mdlle. Gauthier striving to give effect to the inflexible malignity of Virginie. The Vaudeville gives us two new pieces,—*La Chanson du Printemps*, a love-story in the style of *Le Passant*, and *La Villa Blanmignon*, a three-act comedy, which narrowly escaped utter condemnation. The Palais-Royal has produced a new piece, *La Revue trop tôt*, written in order that Mdlle. Legault might imitate Mdlle. Bernhardt, M. Plat the acting of M. Delaunay in *L'Etincelle*, and M. Lhéritier some of the amusing peculiarities displayed by M. Sarcey in his "conference" at the Gaiety Theatre last June. It is preceded by *La Perruque*, the fun of which lies in the efforts made to ascertain whether an allegation made by a disappointed suitor in reference to her husband—namely, that he wears a wig—is or is not true. The manager of the Nonveautés, temporarily abandoning operetta, reproduces *Les Trente Millions de Gladiator*, Madame Céline Montalaud, as before, being in the cast. At the Chateau d'Eau, a blood-curdling melodrama, *Le Loup de Kervegan*, is being played amidst loud applause. Last, but not least, *Claudie*, often esteemed the finest play left by Madame Sand, has been revived at the Théâtre Cluny, M. Paul Esquier and Mdlle. Marie Laure appearing in it to particular advantage. The performance over, the company, in the presence of the audience, gathered round a bust of the authoress, and some verses by M. de Banville, verses highly praised by M. Sarcey for delicacy and feeling, were recited by M. Tallien.

IN BERLIN.

THERE was a revival of theatrical activity during the latter half of August, and by the middle of September most of the theatres of the German capital were at full work. The Royal Playhouse re-opened on the 16th of August with Kleist's *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, and has since given a daily change of programme, producing *King Lear*, *The Comedy of Errors*, several of Goethe's and Schiller's plays, and a number of pieces selected from the modern repertory, but no novelty has yet been produced. The Residenz Theater re-opened on the 27th of August, under the management of Herr Otto von Schimmelfennig, who chose for his opening piece a new farcical comedy by Herr Oscar Justinus, entitled *Unser Zigeuner*, a work of little merit, having for its subject the well-worn theme of the subjugation

by the power of love of a rugged man who has led a wandering life. The first appearance of several new members who have been added to the forces of the company lent to the performance an interest which the play itself could not excite. In Fräulein Haydn the manager has made the acquisition of a young actress of unquestionable talent, but of imperfectly-developed powers, while in Herr Müller we find an actor of marked humour, who rapidly gained the favour of the audience. Fräulein Hagen and Herr Nollet may also be named amongst the most promising of the new members of the company. At the end of August the Wallner Theater produced, under the not very promising title of *Sodom und Gomorrha*, a new farcical comedy by Herr Franz von Schönthan, which bids fair to rival the success of the prosperous *Doctor Klaus*. After many vain efforts to induce the managers to produce his dramatic works, Herr von Schönthan tried to gain a firm footing on the stage by adopting the calling of an actor, in which capacity he did not succeed in attaining more than a respectable position, nervousness impeding his efforts from first to last. He has now made a decided hit, and will probably henceforth devote himself exclusively to writing for the stage. The plot of *Sodom und Gomorrha* is too complicated to be briefly narrated; the construction is neat and effective, and bears marks of a profound study of Sardou by its author; the dialogue is crisp and vigorous, and the hearty laughter which accompanied the performance was evoked by the humour of the characters and situations without any transgression of the bounds of good taste. The cast was effective. Herr Kadelburg received a warm welcome on his return to the boards on which he had gained many a triumph, and was found to have profited by his long absence in Vienna. Fräulein Hellborn played the part of a vivacious *ingénue* with such spirit that she at once gained the favour of the audience, and was regarded as a very valuable accession to the strength of the company. In the character of a jealous wife, Frau Carlsen made a most successful *rentrée*, while in the part of a housemaid Fräulein Löffler gave a piece of character-acting which for truth to nature may rank with her remarkable impersonation of the servant-girl in *Doctor Klaus*. At the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt Theatre Frau Marie Geistinger fulfilled a highly-successful engagement during the latter half of August and the early part of September in the title-part of Offenbach's *Madame Favart*, now produced for the first time in Berlin. Two years ago the frequenters of the Thalia Theatre applauded this versatile actress in such characters as Elizabeth and Adrienne Lecouvreur, and now she brings to opera-bouffe a delicacy of style not generally associated with that class of composition. The success of Offenbach's latest work was great, the leading actress being well-supported by Herr Swoboda, Herr Klein, Herr M. Schulz, and Fräulein Müller.

IN VIENNA.

THE dull season ended with August, and the 1st of September found all the leading theatres open once more. The Burgtheater opened with Shakspere's *As You Like It*; and during the first week of the season Goethe's *Iphigenie*

auf Tauris, Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, comedies by Sardou and Barrière, and a couple of modern German works were given. The long-promised revival of *King Lear* was to have taken place early in the month, but has been postponed on account of the illness of Herr Baumeister, to whom the part of Kent has been allotted. The first novelty of the season is to be a new tragedy by Herr Gottschall, entitled *Amy Robsart*, in which Fräulein Wessely is to play the title-part, while Frau Wolter is to be the Queen Elizabeth, and Herren Robert (Leicester), Lewinsky, Gabillon, Krastel, and Mitterwurzer have prominent characters allotted to them. On the 30th of August, the Stadt-theater was reopened, under the management of a committee, consisting of four of the leading members of the company, with Herr Franz Nissel's tragedy, *Agnes von Meran*, which recently gained the Schiller prize in Berlin. The scene is laid in the twelfth century, and the plot turns upon the conflict of Philippe Auguste of France, with Pope Innocent III., on account of his repudiation of his first wife Ingeborg of Denmark, and his marriage with the fair Agnes de Meran. The play is of great literary merit, and some of the scenes are highly effective in representation. Fräulein Frank was a very powerful representative of Ingeborg, but the title-part was in weak hands, and the rest of the cast was not very strong. The performance was nevertheless much applauded, and the tragedy was repeated several times. Early in September, a German version of the *Fils Naturel* of M. Dumas, first produced at the end of last season, was again given for a few times with the old cast, and then Gutzkow's *Königslieutenant* was produced with an interesting cast, comprising Herr Friedmann as Thorane, Herr Swoboda as Mack, Fräulein Fanny Link as Grethe, and Fräulein Schendler as the boy Goethe. The performance was on the whole satisfactory, though Fräulein Schendler was not quite equal to the task assigned to her. The committee of management have various novelties in preparation, including a five-act farcical comedy entitled *Sport*, by Herr Julius Rosen; a comedy in four acts from the same prolific pen, entitled *Starke Mittel*; Adolph Willbrandt's *Chriemhild*; an adaptation from the French of Daville, entitled *Wie Frauen lieben*; a new play by the Polish poet, Michael Balucky, entitled *Byle wyzej*, or in the German *Die Jagd nach dem Glücke*; a new play by Herr Martin Greif, entitled *Prinz Eugen*, &c. At the end of August, the return of Herr Teweles, the manager, and of Herr Blasel, a leading comic actor, imparted new life to the performances at the Carl Theater, which had remained open throughout the summer, being occupied by visitors during the absence of the regular manager. *Niniche*, the piece which recently enjoyed so long a run at the Théâtre des Variétés, Paris, and which may be regarded as superior in point of both indecency and cleverness to most French farces of the last twenty years, was the piece selected for the *rentrée* of Herren Teweles and Blasel, and on a subsequent evening Lecocq's *Cent Vierges* was revived for the first time for several years, under the title of *Hundert Jungfrauen*. That most successful of German plays, *Doctor Klaus*, has also reappeared on the bills, and *Le Mari de la Débutante* of Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy, under its German name of *Der Mann der Debutantin*. The Theater an der Wien remained closed till near the end of September, when it was to be reopened with *Die Kinder des*

Capitäns Grant, which has had a run of over 120 nights at the Victoria Theater in Berlin.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan, the principal theatres remained closed throughout the month of August and for the greater part of September, and the performances at the minor houses were not such as to call for any notice, except in one instance. The success of the *Assommoir* in Paris seems to have directed the attention of Italian managers to the more purely dramatic productions of M. Zola, notwithstanding the fact that they have been invariably condemned by the playgoers of Paris. The *Thérèse Raquin* of M. Zola was produced in an Italian version at the Commenda Theatre early in September. The fame of the author attracted a pretty large audience, considering the time of the year. The first three acts were applauded, but the fourth act proved too grotesquely absurd even for an audience in shirt-sleeves, while the critics condemned the piece *in toto* as a commonplace melodrama. *Thérèse Raquin* was also produced about the same time at one of the minor theatres of Rome with an equally unsatisfactory result. The manager of the Dal Verme Theatre has issued his prospectus for the coming autumn season of opera. The list comprises the *Guarany* of Signor Gomez, *Traviata*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, a new opera by Signor Smareglia entitled *Preziosa*, and *Norma* and *Roberto il Diavolo*. In the course of the season Signor Salvini is to give four performances.

18

IN NEW YORK.

THE dramatic season had fairly set in when the last mail left for England. Wallack's Theatre reopened on the 18th August with a piece called *Wolfert's Roost*, based, as its title would suggest, upon that and other legends invented or elaborated by Washington Irving. It is so constructed as to throw one figure into the sharpest possible relief, the tender sentiment and weird tone of the original being preserved to a greater extent than might have been thought possible. The chief character, Ichabod Crane, is represented by Mr. Raymond with much care and effect, but is not exactly realized. Booth's Theatre, lavishly redecorated, was reopened on the 4th September by Mr. Boucicault with his new drama *Rescued*, which did not meet with a very hearty reception. The scene of the play is laid in London. A betting earl has been fleeced of his entire estate on the race-course by a professional gambler, who enjoys the plunder for many years on the Continent, and, after very properly bequeathing his ill-gotten gains to Sybil, the Earl's daughter, dies in a becomingly repentant frame of mind. But this bequest is coupled with the condition that the maiden must marry the gambler's friend, Count Ruskoo. Devoted to her father, she consents to become the victim. The Earl's lawyer, however, scrutinizes the will immediately prior to the marriage, and his examination reveals the fact that the

documents are forgeries. At this juncture the true heirs to the estates are found in a locomotive engineer, John Weatherly, who is also the lawyer's client. John has invented a new swing-bridge, and is trying to secure a patent for his discovery. The other heir is a child of whom all traces are lost. The Earl and his daughter, being convinced of the justice of Weatherly's claim, retire from the estate, and the engineer takes possession. Moved by pity for the impoverished nobleman, John offers Sybil his hand and fortune. The lady fully appreciates his generous motive, but declines. Pending this, the Count has resolved to sweep Weatherly and the child, whom he has recently discovered, from his path. The latter obtains knowledge of the child's place of concealment, and causes the arrest of the Count's valet for stealing the child. While the party are *en route* for London the Count endeavours to wreck the train, but fails, and John and Sybil find the fate of all true lovers in the joys of matrimony. The story, it will be seen, is not unconventional, and it is not worked out with exceptional skill. The great sensation scene is the passage of a train over a swinging bridge, which the villain has left open with nefarious intent, and which the heroine closes. The cast included Mr. John Clayton, Miss Coghlan, Mr. George Clarke, and Mr. Dominick Murray. The first has created a favourable impression, although his delivery is deemed unpleasing. On the 8th Mr. Sothern reappeared at the Park Theatre as Brother Sam. He was most warmly received, and his company, especially Miss Julia Stewart, won the good opinion of the audience. A few days afterwards *Narcisse* was given at the Standard, with Mr. Bandmann as the hero.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

DURING her German tour Mdme. Adelina Patti will appear once at the Theatre Royal, Dresden, in *Lucia*.

MR. TENNYSON's new drama *Thomas à Becket* has been sent to Mr. Irving, with a view to its production at the Lyceum. If accepted it will have to be considerably reduced.

Le Cid and *Le Mariage de Figaro* are to be revived at the Comédie Française. In the former piece, which may be repeated very soon, Mdlle. Dudlay plays Chimène, a part in which Mdlle. Bernhardt would appear to signal advantage. *Le Mariage de Figaro* will probably be played in January. A revival of *La Dame aux Camelias*, with Mdlle. Bernhardt as Marguerite and M. Mounet-Sully as Armand, is in contemplation at the same theatre.

The Merchant of Venice will soon be put in rehearsal at the Lyceum.

MADAME TREBELLi, whose tour in Scandinavia is proving very successful, was one of the company invited to Bernstorff on the 6th inst. to celebrate the birthday of the Queen of Denmark. The Princess of Wales, the Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark, and the Czarewitch and the Czarewena were present.

MADAME RISTORI is on her way to Denmark and Sweden.

THE marriage of Mdlle. Carlotta Patti with M. Ernest de Munck was celebrated on the 3rd September at the Eglise de la Trinité, at the end of the Chaussé d'Antin, Paris. The families only were present. The bride's witnesses were the Marquis de Caux and M. Gardoni; the bridegroom's, M. Bourdillon and M. Schizzosa, the manager of the great Australian *tournée*.

SIGNOR SALVINI will shortly give four performances at the Teatro Argentina, Rome.

MADAME PAULINE LUCCA, whose death was announced some weeks ago by several of the Parisian journals, is at present at Baden, near Vienna, in the enjoyment of excellent health, but much persecuted by the *impresarii*. Mr. Mapleson, according to the *Parisian*, proposes an engagement of five months for America, at the rate of 5,000fr. a night, or 400,000fr. for the season. Another, Ferri, holds out the inducement of 800,000fr. for the Australian operatic season. Mme. Lucca is said to have refused the first and to be undecided over the second, hoping, perhaps, for something still more advantageous.

MR. CARL ROSA has engaged Miss Minnie Hauk, who, however, will not appear in *Carmen* under his management.

MR. BYRON, we are pleased to state, will shortly appear at the Gaiety in a series of afternoon performances of some of his four plays, *An English Gentleman*, *Daisy Farm*, *Not Such a Fool as he Looks*, and *Married in Haste*.

THE censure having declined to pass *Marion Delorme*, the late Baron Taylor endeavoured to induce Charles X. to reverse the decision. The king would not do so, but said he would give the poet a pension of £240 as a compensation. "Your Majesty," said Baron Taylor, "may as well make it £500, as M. Victor Hugo is sure to decline the offer."

M. VAUCORBEIL is about to visit Italy in order to arrange with Signor Verdi for the representation of a new opera, to which the maestro is now putting the finishing-touches.

THE production of M. Gounod's *Tribut de Zamora* has been postponed for six months. "J'ai pensé," writes the composer to M. Vauvorbeil, "que je pouvais donner à mon œuvre un développement musical qui me paraît lui manquer."

AN entertainment in aid of the Pontresina English Church-Building Fund was given in that town on the 28th August by Mr. and Mrs. Baneroff, Mr. Barnby, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. St. Aubyn, and Mr. Arthur Sullivan.

THE agreement entered into by Mdlle. Bernhardt with Mr. Jarrett is that she shall go to America in September, 1880, receive £140 per night, and have all her expenses defrayed. She believes that by that time she will be able to play in one or two English pieces.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT recently agreed to take part in a representation-eoneert at Rouen by Madame Sabatier, but M. Perrin declined to permit her. Though duly apprized of this, Madame retained the actress's name in the bills, and announced to the audience that she had received a telegram from the young sociétaire that she had lost the train. The falsehood was promptly exposed by Mdlle. Bernhardt in a letter to the chief Rouen paper, and Madame has not shown her face in public since.

THE façade of Mdlle. Bernhardt's charming villa in the Avenue de Villiers, built a few years ago, is ornamented with carvings executed by two eminent artists, MM. Rouillièr and Budlot. Their bill amounted to 6,530 francs. Mdlle. Bernhardt paid 4,000 francs cash, and the rest was to have been paid by bills. The last bill of 1,000 francs having been protested, the case came before the Civil Tribunal, and Mdlle. Bernhardt was condemned to pay.

IN the last number of the *Bayreuther Blätter* Herr Wagner announces that the performance of *Parsifal* cannot take place in 1880.

MR. EDWIN BOOTH has made arrangements with Mr. Irving to play at the Lyceum Theatre next spring. His first appearance in London was in 1861, at the Haymarket, and it was a dismal failure. His engagement began in September, when everyone was out of town. He played Riehard III. with a comedy company, Mr. Howe being Richmond. The latter, in the fight, fell back over one of the forward flies; a voice from the gallery cried, "Stick him, old man, he well deserves it," and the curtain came down amidst roars of laughter. Mr. Booth now comes to London under the most favourable auspices.

THE Conservatoire has formally added the study of history to its curriculum, with the idea that pupils will better realize the characters they assume after an acquaintance with the events, costumes, and manner of different periods.

MR. TOOLE has taken the Folly Theatre, which he will open early in November with *A Fool and his Money*. Mr. Loveday, as hitherto, will be his acting-manager.

MADAME CHAUMONT, it is expected, will reappear in London next spring in a new piece, *Le Petit Abbé*.

THE Hon. Henry W. Trimble, late United States Consul at Milan, Italy, died lately at his residence at Montelair, after an illness of three weeks, in the sixty-second year of his age. His daughter is well-known in Italy as a prima donna, under the name of Mdlle. Beatricia Moa.

THE misunderstanding between M. Lassalle and M. Vauvorbeil has been amicably arranged. The former in a letter to his manager acknowledged that the fault was on his side, and regretted having given way to an outburst of hastiness and bad temper. "After the expression of your regret and your promises for the future," M. Vauvorbeil wrote in reply, "I cannot act rigorously; I consent to look

upon your resignation as not sent in, and trust nothing will henceforth disturb our daily relations."

MR. PLANCHE is seriously ill.

WE hear that a duel has been fought on the Belgian frontier between a young diplomatist and a journalist. The former was attached to an actress whose acting the journalist had not treated tenderly. The diplomatist having got a cut on his hand, honour was declared to be satisfied.

MDLLE. GABRIELLE MORALES, one of the most be-photographed young actresses in Paris, was shot through the heart at a house in the Rue de Berri on the 10th ult. by one Eugène Riaudet, whose addresses she had rejected. The murderer soon afterwards blew out his brains.

AN unpublished MS. opera, in three acts, by Haydn, is said to have been discovered among a lot of old music-scores belonging to the late Théâtre Italiens, in Paris. The finder was M. Wekerlin, the librarian of the Conservatoire. The title of the opera is *Vera Costanza*. It was originally composed by Haydn for the Vienna Opera-House, and soon afterwards brought to Paris.

THE little piece, *Celle qu'on n'épouse pas*, lately brought out at the Gymnase, was, it appears, recommended to the manager of that theatre by M. Dumas, to whom the author, an as yet unknown writer, had ventured to submit it.

MR. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPS has in the press a little book designed to show that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* could not have been written before 1596.

MR. SPALDING has expanded his paper "On the Devils in Shakspere" into a little book on witchcraft in Shakspere's days, which will appear shortly.

A NEW novel in two volumes, entitled *Daireen* by Mr. F. Frankfort Moore, author of the comedies *Moth and Flame*, *A March Hare-hunt*, &c., is announced. A somewhat original feature of Mr. Moore's new novel consists in each chapter being headed by a series of quotations from *Hamlet* applicable to the scenes described in the story.

MR. PALGRAVE SIMPSON and Mr. Claud Templar have been passing several weeks in the Lake district. There they were met by an eminent dramatic critic, and awful goings-on are reported. The veteran dramatist, we are pleased to add, is in excellent health.

THE following lines have been applied to the versatile Mr. Templar by a kind friend :

De nos papillons enchanteurs,
Ami trop fidèle,
Vous caressez toutes les fleurs
Excepté l'immortelle.

M. ALPHONSE DAUDET commences his theatrical review in the *Journal Officiel* of the 22nd ult. by criticising a piece brought out in July !

MR. DION BOUCICAULT has now a "house" that he can move about with as he pleases—a yacht. "For," he says, "I can run in anywhere and lay off any friend's house on the Hudson or the Sound, or take trips into the cool regions on the coast of Maine. I can always choose my own neighbours; the drainage is always sure to be good; I can run away from the mosquitoes, and can have a breeze whenever I choose to drive her along. My floating country-house, such as it is, seems to me to possess advantages which I could not get out of real estate, and looked at in that light, is rather more economical."

Diplomacy did not succeed in America. "The play," Mr. Lester Wallace says, "cost me an enormous amount of money; I don't think one was ever better produced in my theatre. An eminent actor said the presentation was much

better than in London, where it ran over 150 nights. I could scarcely get seven weeks out of it. Papers spoke well of it, the public liked it. But it wouldn't run."

A GAY youth lately made an insulting remark to Miss Kate Claxton, at Sedalia, Mo. The lady mentioned the matter to her husband, Mr. Stevenson, who immediately visited the young gentleman at his home. After a brief but animated interview, Mr. Stevenson left the vivacious Sedalian in care of two local doctors.

AT Aix-les-Bains :—M. Coquelin ainé.—Tu n'aimes pas les montagnes ?—M. Coquelin cadet.—Non. Où il y a de la *chaîne*, il n'y a pas de plaisir !

"AND so you are the author of something else than your own misfortunes ?" "Yes, of real plays." "Tell me, now, for I am very ignorant about such things as the divine afflatus and all that. What is the moment in writing when you feel the greatest ecstasy ? When the villain is baffled, eh ?" "Yes, and that's when you sign the receipt for the manager's check."

M. VICTOR HUGO, talking about age, not long ago, confessed that the most disagreeable advance to him was that from thirty-nine to forty. "But," said a friend, "I should think it a great deal better to be forty than fifty." "Not at all," replied M. Hugo ; "forty years is the old age of youth, while fifty years is the youth of old age."

"WELL, as we have nothing to do this evening, I'll read my last play to you." "You shall, on the condition that you listen to one of mine first." "No ; afterwards." "No ; beforehand." "Good-bye, then." "Good-bye."

NOT long ago an American who had never paid more than a very small sum to see a play entered a New York theatre where the *Forty Thieves* was being played. The ticket-seller charged him about two dollars for admission. "I don't want to see the other thirty-nine, stranger," he coolly remarked, as he walked away.

AN American in London has been detected in the act of translating *Pinafore* into Welsh. Wghat ! nvgr ! wjell hrdgly evjr.

THE house in which Balfe was born, No. 10, Pitt-street, Dublin, is now the property of William Logan, a Dublin musician, who promises to place, at his own expense, a medallion of the composer on the front of the house.

A CRITIC says of the characters in the novels of Octave Feuillet: "He tries to make his heroines fascinatingly sinful, and at the same time exceedingly moral. The result is that they do not fascinate, and that they do not edify us." It might be answered that fascination is the last thing that the reader should desire, and edification the last that he could hope for. There is a morbid propensity among novelists to "plate sin with gold."

A DRAMATIC author was boasting of the number of plays he had written, saying that more than a hundred had been produced on the boards. "More than a hundred plays, and all of them performed ?" exclaimed some one in astonishment. "Yes ; and the most curious feature in connection with the fact is that no one seems to be aware of it."

MR. B—N—D modestly says that his chief literary acquirements are the books he has borrowed and never returned.

MR. TOOLE recently asked a provincial manager why he had parted with his leading tragedian. "I could not help it," was the reply ; "he ranted so that the people could hear him from the outside, and therefore wouldn't pay to go in."

MR. BYRON observes a curious contradiction. One Havannah cigar, he says, may make a man ill, but two will not make a Manilla.

WIEN, in 1853, Mme. de Girardin's *Lady Tartuffe* was brought out, some one said to the authoress, "What imagination you must have to have found the *résumé*

of all the vices that you incarnate in your sad heroine." "My imagination had nothing to do with it," replied Mme. de Girardin; "I simply summed up all my best and most intimate lady friends." So at least the *Parisian* tells us.

BRIGNOLI says: "Ten years ago I could not sing. The critic he say so, and the critic ees right. I was much aspirate, so (drawing a short, sharp breath) like zat, but now I travel all de day, get no sleep ze night, and I sing one hour and I don't feel it. I love ze Engleesh song. I sing him better zan before. I could sing ze Engleesh song all ze night."

BJÖRNSTERNE, the Norwegian poet, describes Herr Wagner as the "greatest scald" of the century.

HERE is a mot of Méry. "Ah!" said a fellow-townsman, meeting the poet in a *salon*, "c'est vous qui faites des verses?" "Oui, j'en faisse."

THE MS. of Dr. Doran's pleasant book, *Their Majesties' Servants*, has been presented by his family to the South Kensington Museum.

MR. AUGUSTUS HARRIS has taken Drury-lane Theatre for five years, and will reopen it at Christmas with a pantomime by the Brothers Grinn (Mr. Blanchard).

MR. HATTON and Mr. Mathison have finished an adaptation of Mrs. Burnett's *Man of the North*, which will probably be produced by Mr. and Mrs. Billington at a West-end theatre.

MR. GEORGE RIGNOLD sailed from Australia for England, via San Francisco, on August 14, after a long and very successful tour in the Colonies.

THE death is announced of Mrs. Wybrow Robertson.

MISS AUGUSTA WILTON, sister of Mrs. Bancroft, has been married to Mr. Bashford, late of the Scots Greys, but will not at present leave the stage.

THE death is announced of Mr. George Bennett, famous for his impersonations at Sadler's Wells, under Mr. Phelps's management, of Caliban, Enobarbus, Ape-mantus, Sir Toby Belch, and other characters. He was eighty years of age.

MR. EVELYN JERROLD, Mr. O'Shea, and Mr. S. Bennett have written a farcical piece about the Lord Chamberlain. What his lordship will think of it remains to be seen.

MRS. BATEMAN opens Sadler's Wells on the 9th with *Rob Roy*.

MDLLE. CROIZETTE has been compelled by ill-health to absent herself from the Comédie Française for a few weeks.

M. SARDOU has finished a comedy for the Palais-Royal. The chief part will be sustained by Madame Celine Montaland, who is now playing in *Les Trente Millions de Gladiator*, the dresses for which, by the way, cost 12,000 francs.

THE Vaudeville, the *Parisian* understands, will not have M. Dumas's comedy this year. It appears that M. Ganderax's three-act comedy, which M. Dumas undertook to retouch and arrange, has not turned out so well as had been expected. The first act is excellent, but when he came to work on the second and third M. Dumas found that the idea was rather too thin to support three acts.

M. VAUCORBEIL is preparing a revival of *Faust* with Mdlle. Krauss in the part of Marguerite.

MDLLE. BARTET, the *jeune première* and *ingénue*, is going to the Théâtre Français. Her place at the Vaudeville will be taken by Mdlle. Alice Lody.

THE *Chevalier de la Morlière*, by MM. Denney and Poupart-Davyl, will shortly be put in rehearsal at the Ambigu.

M. JULES CLARÉTIE's piece, *Mirabeau*, will succeed *Notre Dame de Paris* at the Historique. The author has just read his piece to the company.

M. CARVALHO has written to acquaint his artists that, owing to the non-completion of the repairs and decorations, it is doubtful when the Opéra Comique will be re-opened. He hopes to commence his new season early in October.

M. LECOCQ's new opera, *La Jolie Persane*, has been accepted at the Renaissance. The chief part is allotted to Mdlle. Hading, and two new-comers, Mdlle. Gelabert and Mdlle. Norette, are to appear in secondary characters. On the production of this piece, Mdlle. Granier and Mdlle. Vauthier will go to Brussels to play in *La Petite Mademoiselle*.

MDLLE. HEILBRON will appear at the Paris opera early in November as Marguerite in *Faust*.

A COMEDY in three acts, *Une Mariage d'Orgueil*, by M. Ohnet, has been accepted at the Vaudeville.

By a new police ordonnance the hour of closing theatrical representations at Paris is fixed at half-past twelve instead of twelve, as was formerly the case.

M. HIPPOLYTE HOSTEIN has suddenly died of apoplexy, which came upon him as he was making some purchases in the Rue Boileau, Paris. Born in 1814, he studied medicine, wrote plays, and then became the manager of the Historique, the Gaité, and the Châtelet successively. Latterly M. Hostein was theatrical critic of the *Constitutionnel*, a post in which he is succeeded by M. Georges Ohnet.

M. KONING has found, at Dieppe, a comic baritone, M. Marquetti, and a bouffe actress, called Mdlle. Lentz. Both are engaged at a large salary, for three years, at the Renaissance.

ACCORDING to report, the novelties this season at the Italian Opera, St. Petersburg, will include *Le Roi de Lahore*, *La Regina di Saba*, and Boito's *Mefistofele*.

AT the Teatro Manzoni, Rome, three operas, new for that city, *Napoli di Carnovale*, *Rabagas*, and *Le Donne Curiose*, will be performed in the course of the season.

IT is said that the Mausoleum of Augustus at Rome is to be transformed into a play-house.

SIGNOR TAMBERLIK is to be future manager of the Liceo, Barcelona. He will, of course, do his best to secure Mdlle. Zaré Thalberg.

MDLLE. FIORETTI, the dancer, is dead.

IT is proposed to build a theatre in Sophia, the future capital of Bulgaria, and a subscription has been started for the purpose.

Le Nabab, now in rehearsal at the Paris Vaudeville, is to be produced in New York, with Mr. Wallack as the Duc de Mona.

THERE is some trouble brewing between the theatrical profession in New York and the railroads, growing out of a notification that in future the custom of giving travelling companies special rates is to be abolished. Managers and agents have already had more than one meeting about it. The special rates heretofore have been from 25 to 30 per cent. below the regular rates of fare. It is estimated that in the course of a year upwards of \$1,000,000 is spent by the theatrical profession for travelling in the United States.

MR. THOMAS JEFFERSON, jun., and Miss Eugenia Paul, at Hoboken, N.J., the residence of Rip Van Winkle, on the 21st August, did then and there, with malice prepense, commit irrevocable matrimony.

MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON's winter home in Louisiana is described as a very beautiful one, surrounded by the flowers of which he is extravagantly fond. Mr. Jefferson's eldest son occupies the place, and grows quantities of rice, sugar, cotton and oranges.

Our Boys has been produced at Bangalore.

MR. CRESWICK was playing at Sydney in July.

The Theatre.

NOVEMBER 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

REGENERATING THE STAGE.



T is a well-known dictum which affirms that all great reforms have to pass through three stages before their accomplishment. At first their very suggestion is laughed out of court; then their nature is found worthy of serious discussion; and finally they are adopted. Whatever may be the relative time which is occupied by the two earlier phases of the struggle for existence, it is certain that the step from ridicule to argument is at least as difficult as that from argument to acceptance.

We hail, therefore, with earnest satisfaction the evidence that a question of vital interest to the drama which we have long laboured to bring prominently before thoughtful men and women, and which has long been hooted down by narrow-minded prejudice, or sneered at by cheap cynicism, is after many days beginning to command the grave attention which it intrinsically deserves. It is easy to win a thoughtless laugh for a jest at the expense of the moral influence of the stage; easier still to demonstrate in a humorous manner the supposed impossibility of founding a national school of acting; and easiest of all to hold up to scorn arguments, theories, and plans which chance to be imported by well-meaning but injudicious enthusiasts into a good cause. Never has there been an occasion on which the sceptical enemy has found a larger number of weak places open to the artillery of satire, for it has not seldom happened that allies have had to be received from amongst those whose own position is sadly in need of defence. Now, however, there are not wanting signs such as he who runs may read that the time is fast coming to an end when any reference to the regeneration of the stage, to its elevation and its recognition as a great æsthetic factor, can be dismissed by a curl of the lip and a shrug of the shoulders. On all sides is to be heard discussion as to the advisability of taking some general action in the matter, as to the means to be employed, and as to the precise object to be aimed at. The subject is

now taken up as a stock text by editors and their leader-writers in the leading daily journals, whereas a very short time ago it would have been felt that a leader on such a topic in the *Daily News* or *Daily Telegraph*, to say nothing of *The Times*, was matter for a nine days' wonder. Men of mark in art and science altogether apart from the stage have in public formulated their opinions for or against the steps which have been proposed ; and it is clear that the question will now be thoroughly thrashed out before it is allowed to drop. What practical result comes of the deliberations of the extended social parliament which now deals with subjects of this nature cannot, of course, yet be seen ; but whether there be any definite outcome or not, and whether or not any such outcome be really needed by the exigencies of the case, much is gained when for flippant ridicule is substituted a serious discussion, and when it is made clear that the theatre and its doings are no longer held by intellectual men to be worthy only of indifference or contempt.

The chief direct evidence of this newly-born belief in the possibilities of our stage, and this sympathetic eagerness to remove the evils by which it is admittedly disfigured, is of course provided in the proceedings which took place last month in the Art Section of the Social Science Congress, although it must not be forgotten that these proceedings were merely the public and prominent embodiment of a widespread interest which has manifested itself in a variety of less emphatic ways. The object of this meeting, which was fitly presided over by the liberal-minded Bishop of Manchester, was fairly described in *The Times*' report as a discussion on the moral aspects of the drama and the stage, and upon the whole the papers read and the remarks made by different speakers travelled less widely beyond the limits of pertinence than is often the case at these semi-social and barely scientific gatherings. Mr. Woodhouse's opening paper confined itself principally to kindly common-place concerning the drama as a mighty power for good ; indeed, its title was, "On the Power of the Drama as a Moral Teacher." As was not unnatural, he made this educational influence of the stage the principal and most desirable object of its existence, forgetful of the fact that its true and thoroughly legitimate aim is the recreation of the playgoer, the moral lessons which it conveys being accidental, or at any rate wholly subsidiary. The practical objection to this attempted assimilation of the theatre to the Sunday-school is that the moment any such intention on the part of its management was suspected the entertainment would become absolutely distasteful. To all protests against the teaching from the stage of that which is morally wrong a ready ear should be turned ; but we cannot too carefully guard against accepting the theory that the stage exists in order to teach what is right. In other respects the Rev. F. C. Woodhouse, like more than one of the subsequent speakers, failed to show such an acquaintance with the actual achievements of the theatre of to-day as would give weight to his inquiry with reference to the influence of the drama. "Why let all this force run to waste, or rather be the motive power of so many engines of mischief and destruction ?" Where a man treats the theatre of the day from this point of view he is, it seems to us, on the horns of a dilemma. Either he has been for one reason or another debarred from seeing what is

actually attempted and achieved at our leading theatres, or else having seen it, and remaining so wholly dissatisfied, he is deficient in the discrimination needed to enable him to distinguish between the indifference, or worse than indifference, of the many, and the excellence of the few. If either supposition be adopted, his suggestion of a remedy loses force from the obvious imperfection of his diagnosis of the disease. The clergyman, however, was strangely enough followed by an actor, who in his earnest advocacy of his own panacea for the elevation of the stage appeared to lose sight of the excellent results produced in the direction which we have indicated without any such nostrum. For the most part Mr. Hermann Vezin's eloquent essay on "The Moral and Artistic Aspects of the Stage" was unanswerable. Its robust and manly protest, that actors only represent in themselves the ordinary attributes of mankind, some virtuous, some vicious, and all very like their fellow-men before the footlights, had about it a fine rational ring absolutely refreshing, after the feeble arguments derived from the fact that some ballet-girls are regular attendants at church, and that others are members of the Church and Stage Guild. It was time that from amongst the leading ranks of stage-players some voice should be raised to urge the absurdity of this perpetual assumption that actors and actresses are not as other men and women, that they stand in need of special attention from amateur missionaries, and that there is necessary in their case some artificial link to connect them with the Established Church of the country. It is a pity that some player whose opinion would have carried weight was not present at the recent meeting of the singular "Guild" already mentioned, to point out in the name of her sisters in art that they are quite able whenever they are anxious to repel the objectionable stage-door attentions of which Miss Rose, a lady at present unknown to fame, so helplessly complains. A moral man who chances to be an actor is just as able to avoid laxity of conduct as is the member of any other profession; and a modest woman is not by being an actress placed at any special disadvantage when she is accosted, as other unprotected girls too often are accosted, by the Brummagem-gallants of the London streets. It is no doubt a pity that there should be actors who do not lead reputable lives, *soi-disant* actresses whose thirty shillings a week mysteriously provides them with broughams, and other people connected with the stage who are not regular churchgoers. But the stage is not peculiar in having associated with it misfortunes which are suffered by court and camp, and are to be traced alike in the city and in society. It does nothing which gives the public any right to interfere with the private lives of its votaries; and all attempts, however well-intentioned, to regenerate the religious and moral tone of the profession as a whole are as impertinent as they are superfluous. Mr. Hermann Vezin's much-needed protest was followed by a contention which we cannot think equally sound. He urged that a manager should make the interests of art his first consideration; and he recommended that as managers generally look after their pockets, an association of actors should be formed to carry on a theatre solely for artistic ends. For many reasons such a scheme seems wildly Utopian; and it is unlikely to have a trial until there are found actors who perform, not in order to earn handsome salaries, but that they may further the interests of histrionic art. But

setting aside the obvious difficulties in the way of this co-operative management, by actors anxious only to produce new works of merit, the contention is based upon a fallacy. There is no good reason why the interests of art and pocket should not be identical, for theatrical art cannot well be furthered by performances which do not attract audiences sufficiently large to ensure commercial success.

A proposition such as that made by Mr. Hermann Vezin, though it specially disclaimed the need of a State subsidy, naturally suggests the cognate question of an endowed national theatre. This was evidently in the minds of several of the speakers, and it has since been brought into prominence by the vigorous appeal and liberal offer made by Mrs. Pfeiffer in a daily contemporary. We need not here revert to the arguments on either side which have frequently obtained a hearing in these pages, but it must in justice be observed that the proposal stands now upon a footing less secure than it did some short time ago. The new management of the Lyceum has proved that private enterprise can do for serious drama of the highest type that which has been accomplished for contemporary comedy at the Prince of Wales's, the St. James's, and the Court. There is every prospect that Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft will at the Haymarket continue upon a larger scale the good work which they began elsewhere, and on all sides it is being recognised that the surest way to command pecuniary success is by the most artistic possible representation of the best procurable plays. The reform has happily come whence, in order to be efficacious it must always come, from within. It is doubtless a fact that, as the Bishop of Manchester pointed out, the worst type of plays presented in London is given during "the season," and the fact is worthy of consideration which we cannot here give it. But none the less is the general tone of the drama rising with the elevation of taste amongst its general audiences; and this is the only way in which its improvement can be genuine or lasting. Direct interference from outside, whether in the shape of legislation, or endowment, or good advice, can be of little avail unless the theatre is supplying that which the public wants; and when with due respect to itself it does this, we may rest assured the advance of education and taste amongst its patrons will ensure its moral, social, and artistic progress.

THE STAGE DRUNKARD.

THE remarkable success achieved at a prominent theatre by a drama, the suggestive name of which is *Drink*, and by an impersonation which finds its chief *raison d'être* in the delineation of a drunkard and his disease, necessarily draws attention to the limits within which intoxication may legitimately and usefully be treated upon the stage. Mr. Charles Reade has dealt so effectively with M. Zola's unpleasant *L'Assommoir*, and Mr. Charles Warner has made so much out of simulated delirium tremens, that most people are attracted, if only by curiosity, to the theatre which has had the good fortune to secure so striking a performance. As an indication of the species of reputation which this production has made, and is proud of

having made, we may quote a sentence or two from a graphic account of Mr. Warner's efforts which has repeatedly been advertised in the daily press. "With vacantly-staring eyes," we are told, "gray cheeks, falling jaw, and swollen, protruding tongue, his intellect gone out in horrible idiocy, he clutches the twisted snakes of his besotted imagination, which in his delirium seem to writhe about his body and fatten upon his diseased brain. He fights with the grinning demons who besiege him ; he capers foolishly to the giddy tunes of long-dead dances ; even the ghosts of love and laughter mock his frenzy ; he coquettes with the last bottle of brandy which it will ever be his lot to taste . . . until slowly, but surely, the devil wins the game, and the victim drinks and dies in the nameless tortures of the damned." This detailed description, which seems to bear the stamp of an authority upon the subject, is no whit exaggerated. Whether for good or for evil the clever actor elaborates his sketch to such an extent as to make it so repulsive that many a sensitive spectator absolutely sickens at the sight, and it is only by the power of a grim fascination that they are prevented from closing their eyes altogether to the hideous study. Coupeau's "drunkard's chorea" has apparently been worked up in the hospital wards, and we readily take the word of medical men that the symptoms of the terrible disease are reproduced with consummate faithfulness, and with mimicry of the most finished order. But when we have given to the ghastly impersonation all the due deserved by its accuracy, and have admitted that Mr. Warner's artistic power is worthy of all the recognition which it has obtained, we still find ourselves asking whether it is altogether a subject for congratulation that author and actor should by such a scene as this have won their triumph.

That drunkenness must, so long as human nature remains what it is, have its place upon the stage, may readily be admitted. The vice or weakness is capable of most effective dramatic treatment ; its humorous aspects in particular have long lent themselves with singular facility to entertaining interpretation. It is, moreover, undoubtedly well that if the subject is to be illustrated at all, the special phase of it chosen should be delineated with accuracy. As a rule, the fidelity to nature of such sketches is at the best merely superficial. The commonest blunder, for example, of the actor is to miss altogether the effort to appear sober which is characteristic of a man under the influence of drink. Instead of the drunkard earnestly striving to steady his steps and clear his utterance, we have the sober man executing deliberate antics of gait and of speech. The tipsy man's struggle after preternatural gravity is forgotten, and in its place is substituted an unbroken spell of hilarious imbecility. Such performances, however, as the Eccles of Mr. George Honey in the earlier days before it became over-accentuated, and the Coupeau of Mr. Warner, need assuredly not be found fault with on any such grounds as this. They give us life-like drunkards, drunkards such as we cross the road to avoid when we encounter them in our walks, drunkards who make us shudder at the contemplation of their degraded misery, drunkards whom it were a libel on the brute creation to call beasts, and whom we avoid instinctively as dangerous and loathsome. But *Drink* goes of course much further than did *Caste*. It makes of intoxication a subject, instead of an episode.

It may at once be admitted that the general tendency of such a play as Mr. Reade's is, so far as abstract morality is concerned, a good one. *Drink* exhibits only the unattractive and obviously noxious phase of a vicious habit. The hero's miserable destruction by drink is made the inevitable result of his criminal weakness ; the text of the dramatic sermon might well be "the wages of sin is death." We need not enter into the question how far sobriety can be inculcated by a stage-play, or whether the consumption of intoxicating drink at the bars of the Princess's shows any progressive diminution. An effort is honestly made to teach the valuable lesson of temperance, as well as to fill the pockets of managers and dramatist, and so far the object of *Drink* deserves all praise ; but when this has been freely admitted, there still remains the question whether any such task is from this stand-point of art permissible. A walk round the wards of an hospital, a conversation with an intelligent doctor, will soon satisfy us that the cause of many physical miseries, besides delirium tremens, is to be traced to vicious practices, and it is evident that the vivid illustration of these terrible results might to some extent be depended upon to check the crimes which bring them about. But the playwright who is most in love with repulsive realism, and has the greatest faith in practical lessons taught from the stage, will scarcely urge that the dramatic representation of these terrible consequences of crime would be justified by the warning which their contemplation suggests. A line, he might probably tell us, must be drawn somewhere ; and while fully agreeing with him, we, for our part, should retort that this line should be drawn above the morbid elaboration behind the footlights of an appalling disease such as that which supplies the great "feature" of the popular play at the Princess's. Realism is in such matters tolerable only so long as it stops short of actual repulsiveness, and hence it follows that this subject is one which is fit only for the lightest possible treatment upon the stage. Incidentally it may, nay, it must, be occasionally introduced, but to dwell upon it, to work up its offensive details, and to make of it the most that can be made, is to mistake the theatre for the lecture-room, and the actor for the "shocking example." Leaving out of the question the fact that dramatic studies of disease such as this absolutely disgust a very large number of refined playgoers, we have to ask whether it would not be an injury to dramatic art itself if the example here set were to be followed ? Above all things it is necessary for art that it choose subjects worthy of itself, and it is hard to see how the drama can suffer anything but degradation from its employment to show how drunkenness ends in a death-agony which for twenty terrible minutes causes its spectators to shudder and sicken at its sham symptoms and its mimic misery.

MR. DION BOUCICAULT ON HIMSELF.

EVER since, some few years ago, Mr. Dion Boucicault proposed the regeneration of the national drama at Covent Garden by the aid of an autumn pantomime and a wealthy nobleman his propensity for practical jokes has been suspected. He is now an elderly gentleman, but he has all

the spirit and buoyancy of youth, and his residence in the land of big things has given him a fancy for undertakings upon a large scale. Accordingly, when he sets himself to raise a laugh, the laugh is a very loud one indeed, and if he cannot obtain it in any other way, he gets it at his own expense. In this country his last humorous feat has been the grave presentation to the public of the ridiculous *mélange* called *Rescued* as a new drama, in order probably to test how far British credulity will really go. In America, however, he has outdone himself by a letter which he recently addressed to the New York *Spirit of the Times*, a lively organ, devoted to that odd combination, "sport and the drama." Whom Mr. Boucicault is holding up to ridicule in this characteristic effusion it would be hard to say, but as his subject is himself and his dramatic works it seems as though he must be bent upon taking the wind out of the sails of some intending "interviewer" and caricaturing the unfavourable and the unfriendly sketch which he expected to appear. He approaches his topic with a combination of caution and ease which would have been invaluable to him as the back-stairs reporter and moral essayist of a "personal" journal. Beginning with the "theatrical world" at large, and reminiscences of palmy days a quarter of a century ago, he proceeds to discuss the breaking-up of the stock-company system, the injury done by "stars" and the incompetence of managers generally. These latter are, he affirms, "speculators, persons of little capacity, box-office managers, having neither literary nor artistic capacity or judgment, who buy pieces as they would buy liquor—by the brand—and choose actors in the like manner, having neither read the one nor seen the other." Even thus early it is clear that a stupendous joke is intended, akin to that of Mr. Charles Reade in that extraordinary epistle on which we commented last month. No playwright would run the risk of offending by serious attack all the managers of a city where he frequently desires to find a market for his plays. The next thing to do, to parody that low opinion of the Press which his spiteful interviewer would naturally make him express. Accordingly, he proclaims that the Press of New York, be it understood, "exerts a mischievous influence over the stage," and that though "there are many very able men on the journals, they seem to exert their minds rather to write smart articles than to dive for the truth." No two journals, it appears, agree as to the merits of a new play or an actor; "the Press is but a mob of opinions, capable, like all mobs, of doing damage, but not capable of doing good." If Mr. Boucicault would return to these shores once more he would find that in this particular, at all events, the London Press is more to his liking than that of New York; for the unanimity of opinion here concerning *Rescued* could scarcely be mistaken.

But all this time Mr. Boucicault has only been working up to the gist of his joke like those clever conversationalists who prepare pegs on which to hang their witticisms. From the drama at large to the drama of Dion Boucicault is but a short and obvious step, for everybody knows that the author of *Rescued* is the Shakspere of his age. So, still closely following his prescribed model, the writer passes from the general to the particular, and leads off with the statement, "it has been said that my Irish dramas are like each other." No one will be surprised to hear the playwright's answer to this

preposterous charge, which can only have been made by a man capable of detecting a family likeness in the peas in a pod. "There is not the remotest resemblance between them, either in character or plot, that is, neither in features nor shape." This announcement ought to convince the most sceptical, for if the parent knows his children apart, of course everyone else must take his word as to their varieties of physiognomy. Lest, however, there should be any doubt as to the author's competence in a question of this kind, he proceeds to set our minds at rest once and for all. "When," he says, "I wrote *The Colleen Bawn* I invented the Irish drama. It was original in form, in material, in treatment, and in dialogue. *Arrah-na-Pogue* and *The Shaughraun* were as much like *The Colleen Bawn* as one picture of Landseer is like another." Now, Mr. Boucicault is known to be in reality the most modest of men. All great men are, and if he is not a great man we know not where to look for one. Hence he is in no danger of having this self-assertion mistaken, at any rate by those who know him, for a bumptiousness which cannot really be his. So he proceeds to gull the public after his favourite fashion, and to persuade them that the highest eminence in dramatic authorship is consistent with overweening vanity and self-esteem. The metaphor of the pictures by Landseer was tolerably strong, but it is not powerful enough to suit a Boucicault's taste for brilliant effect. So, in the next paragraph, a higher and bolder flight is attempted, and we are informed that, "*The Colleen Bawn* is a wild-flower, *Arrah* is an emerald, and the plays are as like one another as a wild-flower and a jewel ;" and the trumpet is blown louder still to the same tune, for we hear that, "the dialogue in *The Colleen Bawn* is soft, pathetic, or humorous ; the dialogue in *Arrah-na-Pogue* is keen, brilliant, witty."

Lack of space unfortunately prevents our following this writer of keen, brilliant, witty dialogue, this inventor of the Irish drama, this master of tragedy, comedy, and chaff, through the really discriminating criticism and warm appreciation which he bestows upon his own works. He runs up and down the whole gamut of vain self-glorification, he makes himself out a more ridiculous mass of conceit than his worst enemy could possibly have done, and he never for an instant shows consciousness of the braggart part which he has written for himself. It may be that we wrong him in assuming that the strange performance is merely jest perpetrated at the expense of the typical interviewer. Perhaps he is merely obtaining a cheap advertisement in the columns of the despised Press as he did in this country when à propos of one of his plays he urged in the newspapers the cause of some Irish law-breakers. "Anything to keep your name before the public" is, we know, a maxim with many very successful managers and actors, and possibly Mr. Boucicault is one of the number. A man who does not mind walking about on his hands and knees will, of course, attract attention which he would not gain if he adopted a more usual means of progression, and Mr. Boucicault may consider that any feat of newspaper acrobatics is worth performing for the same purpose. In any case he is to be congratulated upon the philosophical disregard of conventionality which enables him in pursuit of his own ends to pose before the public in so ludicrous and contemptible a character.



THE THEATRE, NO. 16, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Sincerely Yours
Caroline Heath

Portraits.

XXXI.—MISS HEATH.

IN the year 1852, soon after the first production in London of the *Corsican Brothers*, Mr. Boucicault and Mr. Stöpel chanced one night to pass through Dean-street, Soho. The theatre now known as the Royalty was still lighted up, as some amateurs were playing there. "Entrons," said the composer to the dramatist, "voyons ce qu'il-y-a." "What!" exclaimed Mr. Boucicault, "to see a play murdered, and at such an hour as this?" "Mais ça nous amusera," rejoined the composer, and in the end the dramatist yielded. The performance, as a whole, did not rise above mediocrity, but just as the unwilling spectator was about to leave there appeared upon the stage a girl, who to rare personal advantages and a pleasing voice united considerable promise as an actress. "Why," he exclaimed, "this is the very incarnation of the 'sweet seventeen' heroines I have dreamed of!" And as soon as the curtain had fallen he hastened to the Princess's Theatre to apprise Mr. Kean of his discovery. The next day the young actress was sought out and taken before the great actor-manager at his theatre. Being assured, she said, that her voice was an excellent contralto, she intended to appear in opera, and had joined a company of amateurs in order to gain experience of the stage. Her name was Heath—Caroline Heath. Mr. Boucicault declared that such talent as hers ought not to be lost to the drama proper, and in the result she accepted an engagement at the Princess's. In the following autumn she made her *début*, the piece selected for the momentous occasion being Mr. Boucicault's *Prima Donna*. Her performance of the heroine—"a matured woman, proud of her position, of a sensitive and passionate nature, but constantly regulated by a stern sense of duty"—more than justified the dramatist's favourable prognostications. "The position of Stella in the Milan scene," Mr. Oxenford wrote, "is very delicate. The discovery that she has been 'cut out' by her innocent little sister, although affecting, borders on the ludicrous, and the skill with which Miss Heath went through a variety of *nuances* that by turns belong to high comedy and pathetic *drame* shows great intelligence in a *débutante*." Miss Heath, it should be said, was at that time only fifteen years of age. Before long she materially strengthened her position, although surrounded by such an excellent company as that which Mr. Kean had collected. In addition to taking part in some of the famous Shakspearean revivals, she appeared to advantage as Bianca in Mr. Palgrave Simpson's version of *Marco Spada*, as Rose Walstein in *From Village to Court*, and as Maud Nutbrown in Jerrold's *Heart of Gold*. The last-named play, which gave rise to the quarrel between its author and Mr. Charles Kean, was a comparative failure, but was a sort of windfall to the young actress. The character of Maud had been written for an experienced actress, and Jerrold complained bitterly of its being cast to "a novice, a mere girl, who had only recently made her first appearance." He was accordingly predisposed to find fault with her acting, but was constrained

to admit that she formed a "graceful exception" to the sweeping censure he passed upon the performance as a whole. Her Maud Nutbrown, indeed, was characterized by much spirit and genuine feeling, the lines descriptive of London as seen from the top of St. Paul's being spoken with remarkable effect. In the meantime Miss Heath had taken part in the performance given before the Royal Family at Windsor Castle under the superintendence of Mr. Kean. Mrs. Kean being taken ill one day, Miss Heath was sent for to play Clara Douglas—a part with which she was entirely unacquainted—the same evening. The ordeal was a trying one, but she did not shrink from it. She instantly proceeded to Windsor, studying the character on the way, and going to rehearsal as soon as she arrived. In spite of the disadvantages she laboured under, the performance was excellent, and from that time the Queen frequently requested her to give dramatic readings at Windsor. Miss Heath was treated at Court as an honoured guest; nay, the princesses were even allowed to kiss her in the Queen's presence, and on one occasion Her Majesty fetched a small table and a light which the actress required in a reading. "How admirably Miss Heath would play *Thekla!*" the Prince Consort exclaimed on seeing her as Juliet. The death of his Royal Highness put an end to the Court theatricals, but it may be stated that the Queen, chancing to meet Miss Heath, then Mrs. Wilson Barrett, at the Perth railway-station, entered into conversation with her for some time, dwelt upon her achievements at Windsor and Osborne, and introduced her to Princess Beatrice and Prince Leopold. From the Princess's Miss Heath passed to Sadler's Wells, where, under the management of Mr. Phelps, she found a larger scope for the display of her talents. Among other original characters he allotted to her was Fiordelisa in the *Fool's Revenge*. In 1860 she returned to the Princess's to support Mr. Fechter in *Ruy Blas*. For many years after this she devoted herself as a rule to the provincial stage, but is now established with her husband at the Court Theatre. Miss Heath belongs to a school of art which is passing out of fashion. The influence of the example set her by Mrs. Charles Kean is discernible in all she says and does; her style is not free from artificiality, and the means by which she creates her effects are not always hidden. Nevertheless, she but rarely fails to add to the interest of a character, inasmuch as her acting is usually distinguished by vigour, sensibility, a quick appreciation of dramatic significance, and a thorough mastery of detail. The parts most prominently identified with her name are Lady Isabel in *East Lynne* and Jane Shore. "Although," says a writer in the *Yorkshire Post*, "the latter is so carefully drawn by the author, the chief credit is due to Miss Heath for the manner in which she has brought it to life. Throughout all the deep emotional scenes of the play she rises to a height of passion which very few living actresses could equal. In the first scene of the last act, where she is starving in the snow, the ravenous manner with which she seizes on the food and her cry of gratitude are things which will not be easily forgotten. The spirit of the author's conception is truly caught, and her rendering of the part is as fine as could possibly have been wished for, even by the author himself—a performance which will delight the general public, and charm the artist and the critic."

The Round Table.

SHYLOCK AND OTHER STAGE JEWS.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

THE persecution to which the scattered Children of the Promise were subjected in this country during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries may be said to form one of the darkest chapters of our history. As far back as the year 750 an Archbishop of York decreed that no Christian should eat with a Jew or "Judaize;" but it was not until Richard Cœur de Lion ascended the throne that the persecution we have referred to appears to have begun. By that time the populace had conceived a bitter hostility to the Jews on account of their faith or rather want of faith, the proved superiority of their talents for commerce, and the inordinate wealth they were supposed to have amassed. The long-discordant elements of which the nation was composed hated them with equal fervour. Any story to their disadvantage, however improbable it might be, found ready and implicit credence. They were believed to be adepts in the black arts, to be engaged in a mysterious conspiracy against Christians as a body, and to have a penchant for crucifying living children. This animosity more than once took a very practical form; Jews were murdered by hundreds, their goods and chattels seized, and their houses razed to the ground. The Norman kings and their nobles, with but few exceptions, did not rise superior to the prevailing madness. Even the generous and high-minded Ivanhoe is represented as shrinking from the touch of Isaac of York. But, like the populace, they did not allow this aversion to extend from the Jew to his possessions. In addition to being heavily taxed for the privilege of living in a country which delighted in oppressing him, he was often seized, conveyed to a castle, and tortured until he surrendered a large portion of his store. It might well be supposed in these circumstances the Jews would have emigrated in a body to more hospitable shores, but the exceptional facilities they enjoyed here in the way of commerce, joined to their love of gain and their eternal hopefulness and daring, induced them to remain at all risks. They saw that by means of bills of exchange they could secure some of their wealth, and in the long run, despite unheard-of exactions, might be in a better position than if they left the country in which their fathers had founded stately synagogues. Before long, however, even so dearly-bought an advantage was denied to them. In the reign of Edward I. they were formally banished from the kingdom.

This decree, it would seem, was enforced or passively submitted to until the third quarter of the sixteenth century, when, under the rule of Elizabeth, the material prosperity of England rose to an almost unprecedented height. The Jews at this time were to be found in nearly all parts of Europe, but more especially on the smiling shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. Their

vitality as a race must have impressed the most superficial observer. Here tolerated only to be robbed, there proscribed altogether, they increased in numbers and wealth, at the same time preserving their ancient and simple faith, their national character, their peculiar institutions and observances, and their profound trust in the fulfilment of the promises made to them in Holy Writ. If they ever violated the rules of good citizenship the chief blame should be laid upon the laws and customs which seldom allowed them to be citizens. Both history and experience of human nature teach us that if a man is unjustly and persistently degraded he will probably come to merit the worst that can be said of him. The gravest of the charges laid at the door of the Jews was hard rapacity, but it should be remembered that the conditions under which they lived made rapacity essential to their existence. This, however, was a view which English Christians of the sixteenth century were not disposed to take. The old hatred of the Jews had descended as a sort of heirloom from generation to generation, and had been fanned by daily reports of the commercial genius they had displayed in the chief marts of the Continent. Evidently unaware of the existence of such a feeling, many Jews ventured to settle in England from the beginning of the period we have referred to, and about the year 1586, after the fashion of many other European sovereigns, Queen Elizabeth attached a Hebrew physician, Rodrigo Lopez, to her court. These events, as may be supposed, created quite a panic among the people at large. The Jews, it seemed certain, would be allowed to re-establish themselves in the country, diminish the profits of good Christian traders, pervert crowds to Judaism, and, as in former times, crucify children in derision of the true religion. The prospect seemed to sting everyone to fury; indeed, it may be doubted whether the triumph of the Armada would have been regarded as so great a disaster to the nation as the legalized reappearance of Israelites in the City of London.

The alarm proved entirely groundless, but before it had subsided two plays holding up the persecuted race to hatred and contempt were judiciously brought out. In or about 1579, as we learn from Gosson, a piece called *The Jew* was "showne at the Bull" Theatre in St. John Street Road. It dealt with the "greediness of worldly seekers and bloody mindes of usurers," and was probably received with great delight by the City traders and 'prentices who frequented that house. The second piece, Marlowe's *Rich Jew of Malta*, which seems to have been produced in 1591, must have proved even more popular than the first. Not only is it an excellent example of the author's skill, but the principal character, by name Barabas, is one of the most thoroughpaced rascals who have ever ventured to show their faces to an audience. The Governor of Malta having deprived him of a hoard of ill-gotten wealth in order to pay the Turkish tribute, he vows dire vengeance against his oppressor, and it is upon the schemes he devises to this end that the plot turns. In what we are allowed to see of his career he perpetrates a variety of little villanies. He foments a quarrel between two men in order that they may kill each other,—which they do. He prevails upon his daughter, of course from interested motives, to pretend to become a nun, and finding that she has done so in reality unceremoniously poisons her with

several others. He betrays Malta to the Turks, but soon afterwards returns to the citadel, makes his peace with the Governor, and conspires to poison the man from whom he has just taken the reward of treason. In the end he is caught in his own trap, and dies with curses against "damned Christian dogs and Turkish infidels" on his lips. This cheerful character, though vigorously drawn, is almost entirely destitute of humanity, and in any but a Jew-hating age would have been scouted as a caricature. Its original representative was Edward Alleyn, who rendered it additionally grotesque by appearing in a false nose of a remarkably ruddy hue.

The caricature, however, was generally accepted as a portrait, and the animosity against the Jews seemed to increase for some time after the appearance of the play. That animosity extended even to the Court, as may be inferred from an event which in the year 1594 attracted for nine days the attention of the whole nation. Dr. Lopez had acquired considerable influence over the mind of the Queen, now in the vale of years. Was it not likely that he would abuse that influence so far as to induce her to set aside the decree of Edward I.? In the result some courtiers formed a cabal to prevent such a calamity by depriving him of his post. Intrigue to this end proving ineffectual, they accused him of entering into a correspondence with the King of Spain, and even of conspiring to hasten Her Majesty's end by poison. The evidence in support of the accusation, if we may judge from that which has been handed down to us, would not in our days be deemed conclusive; nevertheless, Lopez was arrested, tortured until some "confession" was wrung from him, brought to trial in the Guildhall before Lord Essex and others, and condemned to an ignominious death. There is no record extant of the sentence being carried into effect, but as he is mentioned in subsequent state papers as the late Dr. Lopez, we may presume that it was. The news of his condemnation, no doubt, was received with savage joy all over the country. Hatred of his race went with patriotism and loyalty to render him an object of universal detestation. I can well believe that angry crowds followed him as he was taken away from the court, that bonfires were lighted in celebration of his fall, that his name was never mentioned without a fierce execration. If any doubts had been entertained as to the possibility of such a personage as Master Marlowe's Barabas they would now have been set at rest.

It was amidst the excitement induced by the supposed iniquities of Dr. Lopez—and as far as I know the coincidence has never yet been pointed out—that the *Merchant of Venice* appeared. The dramatic force and beauty of this play might lead us to class it with the fruits of Shakspere's matured powers, but there is the evidence of Meres to prove that it was written before 1598, and Malone shows some reason for assigning it to the year 1594. In regard to the object with which it was given to the world, I have come to the conclusion that it was intended as a *plea for toleration towards the Jews*, as an indirect but emphatic protest against the black-washing to which they had been subjected by the "master of the mighty line." That Shakspere made some concessions to the prevailing bitterness against them I at once admit. Not to speak of him in his capacity as a dramatist, he was a theatrical proprietor and an actor, and was accordingly

bound to avoid any risk of offending his audience. He allows it to be inferred that fraud is the badge of the tribe. The idea of the forfeiture of the pound of flesh was manifestly derived from an Italian story to the effect that a Christian had sought to exact such a penalty from a Jew; Shakspere, in defiance of all probability, reverses their positions. The revenge which Shylock deliberately contemplates is of such a nature that the imagination almost refuses to approach it; he is defeated with his own weapons, and—unkindest cut of all!—is required on pain of death to embrace Christianity. These facts are usually regarded as so many proofs that Shakspere was hostile to the nation to which Shylock belongs. But when they have all been allowed an important question remains to be answered. If the character of Shylock is carefully studied it enlists a certain measure of sympathy. How are we to account for this? “By the unconscious tact with which the poet humanizes his *dramatis personæ*,” Professor Ward replies. This, however, is but a part of the truth. The sympathy enjoyed by Shylock, I submit, is designedly aroused in the interest of the great but downtrodden race he represents. The man who exhausted worlds and then imagined new, whose mind was such that at times he seemed to touch some awful secret of the cosmos, whose works are lighted up by wisdom, generosity, and tenderness,—such a man could have had no share in an outburst of vulgar envy and fanaticism. He saw the Jews as they were, and so seeing them wrote *The Merchant of Venice* in order to exhibit one of their number at a disadvantage as, a direct result of the unreasoning prejudice against them. He more than counteracted with one hand what he seemed to do with the other. In availing himself of the greatest popular madness of his time he sought to appease it. His play might have been regarded as an attack upon the Jews, but in reality it defended them. Much of the true significance of the play is to be appreciated only by those who read between the lines, for even if Elizabethan audiences and readers had been well-disposed towards the Jews the dramatist was too great a master of his art to preach his moral. Nor, as I shall endeavour to show, is my view unsupported in any respect by the play itself. No pains appear to have been spared to dignify the character of Shylock. The whole force of an old untainted religious aristocracy is breathed in some of his speeches. He is filled with a generous enthusiasm for his sacred tribe and ancient law. His avarice, a vice forced upon him by circumstances, is relieved by gleams of an originally noble nature. He has so deep a veneration for the memory of his dead wife that “a wilderness of monkeys” would not compensate him for the loss of the ring she had given him in youth. He is tenderly attached to his daughter, whom he leaves in charge of his house and his keys. Many of the graces of intellect, too, are engrafted upon him, as may be seen from his wealth of ideas and the felicitous language in which they are expressed. How comes it, then, that his fine nature has become so warped and soured, his fertility of mind so much misused? As an inevitable consequence of the inherited and personal wrongs he has endured, is enduring, and will always have to endure. Now, these wrongs, observe, are set by the dramatist in the strongest possible light. The sacred nation has been plundered and kept without the pale of

ordinary society for centuries. The respected Antonio, against whom his hate is more particularly directed, is not only a hater of that nation—in itself an inexpiable crime in his eyes—but has reviled him in public as a “dog,” has spat upon his gaberdine and even upon his beard, and intimates his readiness to do such things again. His thirst for vengeance, therefore, if repulsive in itself,—

Minuti

Semper et infirma est animi exiguae voluptas

Ultio,—

is not unnatural, and when the merchant falls into his power it becomes almost sublime. “Hath not,” he asks, “a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.” In penning this energetic protest—the most cogent, perhaps, ever raised against the persecution of the Jews—Shakspere seems to be so far carried away by the force of conviction as to lose sight of the caution imposed upon him by the nature of his relations with the public, and the fact that such words were uttered in a theatre and printed within four years of the condemnation of Lopez (perhaps within as many months) may be cited as a proof of rare moral courage. In the trial-scene Shylock’s reason seems to have been shaken by the flight of his daughter; and the knowledge that Antonio has assisted her to get away, a circumstance often overlooked, may account in some measure for the increased malignity he here displays towards the merchant. If, moreover, we view Shylock in juxtaposition with his enemies, we may gain further evidence as to the dramatist’s intentions. The play was written not so much for the sake of its brighter elements as for the purpose of concentrating attention upon an oppressed and insulted Jew. The enemies of Shylock, one and all, are scarcely permitted to gain even our respect. In the words of Hazlitt, while he is honest in his vices they are hypocrites in their virtues. In all his contests with them the advantage is clearly on his side. These considerations, I think, justify the conclusion at which I have arrived, namely, that in *The Merchant of Venice* Shakspere was animated by a tolerant spirit, indirectly excited sympathy for Shylock by humanizing the character and assigning adequate motives for the vindictiveness ascribed to it, and sought to enforce the truth that the darkest passions of human nature are nurtured by undeserved persecution and obloquy. His reasons for altering the Italian story, perhaps, were very different from what they are commonly supposed to have been.

His intentions, we presume, were fully realized on the stage, for Shylock was represented in the first instance by his friend Burbage, who, I may remark in passing, dressed the character in a red wig. The lessons conveyed in the play evidently sank into more than one heart; during the next half-century, indeed, the time-honoured abhorrence of the Jews appreciably decreased. In 1655, conscious of this change, the proscribed

people applied for permission to return to England, and an assembly of lawyers and divines was called by Cromwell to consider the question. During the deliberations, I think, *The Merchant of Venice* was reprinted, possibly in order to inflame the public mind still more against the Jews, probably with an entirely different object. Prynne, of *Histriomastix* fame, wrote a pamphlet to the effect that the country should be "saved from the disgrace of harbouring clippers, forgers of money, and men who had crucified living children." The lawyers and the divines could not agree upon the question, but before the death of Cromwell, with a sort of sullen acquiescence on the part of the people at large, the decree of Edward I. was allowed to fall into abeyance. In 1701, by which time large numbers of Jews were to be found in London, *The Merchant of Venice* was revived at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, though in a very mutilated form. Those were the days of Tate and Cibber; the days when, as Mr. Morley says, "every fop thought he could mend Shakspere." The work of putting the play into shipshape for this revival was undertaken by Lord Lansdowne. His lordship is entitled to the negative praise of having tampered with the original less than Davenant and Tate and Cibber had done with other plays from the same pen, but this is all that can be said in his favour. It would be an unpleasant task to point out all the alterations he thought proper to make; enough to say that he dragged in a musical masque, made Portia object to marry a Dutchman on the ground that "La Signora Gutts" would not sound well in the mouth of an Italian, omitted the character of Launcelot Gobbo, caused the Jew to sit at a table and drink to money as his only mistress, and last, but not least, humbled the character of Shylock in order that that of Bassanio—played by Betterton—might be exalted. In the prologue the ghost of Shakspere says:—

These scenes in their rough native dress were mine ;
But, now improved, with nobler lustre shine,
In first rude sketches Shakspere's pencil drew,
But all the shining master-strokes are new !

and more to the same effect. But the worst feature of the performance remains to be noticed. Shylock was cast to Doggett, who treated the character as one belonging to the domain of low comedy. It was probably thought that if Shylock were exhibited in a ridiculous light the success of the revival would be more assured. Rowe hastened to suggest that the character was "tragically designed by the author," but the suggestion was not heeded. Doggett would as soon have altered his view of the character as the representatives of the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* would have abandoned the Mother-Hubbard-like dress and the funny dances which they affected in those parts. In 1741, however, Macklin had *The Merchant of Venice* revived at Covent Garden in opposition to Lord Lansdowne's version, although assured by the company that Shakspere "would not do." Antonio was played by Quin, Portia by Mrs. Clive, and Nerissa by Mrs. Pritchard. Macklin himself was the Shylock, treating the character as one intended to move us to terror rather than laughter. For some time the audience were too astonished to applaud, but from the third act onwards the performance was received with enthusiasm, and the curtain fell upon a great

histrionic triumph. "This," exclaimed the author of the *Dunciad* with unwonted warmth,

"Is the Jew
That Shakspere drew."

Not exactly, Mr. Pope. No doubt Macklin depicted with great force the lodged hate and certain loathing of Shylock for the merchant, but contemporary accounts of the performance show that he missed the relief imparted to the figure of the Jew—those fine glancing lights in which the humanity of the character consists. He was simply a "decrepit old man, bent with passion, warped with prejudice, and grinning deadly malice." But do not let this blind us to the importance of the service he rendered to art; *The Jew of Venice* was not again seen on the stage, and everybody came to admit that Shylock had been "tragically designed."

In many plays of the latter half of the eighteenth century a Jew was brought forward, usually in an unfavourable light. "Whenever," we are told, "dramatists wanted a butt, or a buffoon, or a knave to make sport of, out came an Israelite to be baited and buffeted through five long acts for the amusement of all good Christians." The Moses of the *School for Scandal* may be taken as the least offensive instance in point. But in the time of the Reign of Terror a lance was broken on the stage in behalf of this persistently-disparaged people. Some years previously, if I may venture upon a brief digression, Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, a piece written on behalf of the Jewish race, was brought out in Germany. The means employed by the author to secure his end were scarcely happy. Not only is Nathan a sceptic, and therefore a Jew only in name, but the necessity of toleration is urged by the suggestion that after all one faith is no better than another, and that peace and goodwill will never reign on the earth until we all embrace a sort of philosophic deism. The spirit in which Lessing wrote, however, won for his work an almost European reputation, and must have served to uproot many prepossessions against the Jews. In 1794, animated by the same tolerant views as the German poet, but appealing to our sympathies rather than our reason, Richard Cumberland, who in *The West Indian* and *The Fashionable Lacer*, had combated the then general dislike of the Irish and the Scotch, brought out in London his comedy of *The Jew*, the principal character in which is represented as starving himself in order to gratify a naturally-benevolent disposition, and as succouring a Christian youth unjustly cast off by his father. Had such a piece been represented at the time of the production of *The Merchant of Venice* the theatre would have been sacked. The original representative of Sheva, as Cumberland's Jew is called, was John Bannister, supported by Suet, Miss Farren, and Palmer. The Jewish community, ready as they were on all occasions to evince their gratitude to those who defended them, did not take any cognizance of the play. "I do most heartily wish," the author writes, "that they had flattered me with some token, however small, of which I could have said, 'This is a tribute to my philanthropy.' But not a word from the lips, not a line did I ever receive from the pen, of any Jew, though I have found myself in company with many of their nation. And in this, perhaps, they were quite right, whilst

I have formed expectations that were quite wrong. For if I have said of them only what they deserve, why should I be thanked? and if more, much more, than they deserve, can they do a wiser thing than hold their tongues?" The reproach was not undeserved, but perhaps Cumberland did not abandon their cause. In his *Jew of Mogadore*, which appeared in 1808, he reintroduces Sheva to us in another name and under different circumstances.

These plays, though not of a high order of merit, must have had a salutary effect, if only as tending to disabuse the public mind of the impression that the Jews were strangers to virtue in any form, and so preparing the public for one of the most remarkable impersonations ever witnessed on the stage. In playing Shylock, as we have seen, Macklin did not present the character in its entirety; and George Frederick Cooke, who succeeded him as its representative, was equally unable to convey the true meaning of the author to the audience. Edmund Kean seems to have amply supplied the desideratum here indicated. His performance of Shylock amounted to nothing less than a revelation. He vividly and powerfully expressed the vindictiveness of the Jew towards his enemies, but at the same time brought into prominent though just relief the brighter side of the character. This Shylock attracted while it repelled, aroused sympathy while it inspired terror. In the lighter scenes, we are told, there were "a flexibility and indefiniteness of outline about his impersonation, like a figure with a landscape background: Shylock was in Venice with his money-bags, his daughter and his injuries; but his thoughts took wing to the East, his voice swelled and deepened at the mention of his sacred tribe and ancient law, and he dwelt delighted on any digression to distant times and places as a relief from his rooted and vindictive purposes." Kean's conception of the Jew, however, did not at first meet with general acceptance. Hazlitt complained that the actor gave "too much relief" to the "hard, impenetrable, dark groundwork of the character," which was formed of "morose, sullen, inveterate malignity." Before long the critic had the discernment to see and the candour to acknowledge his error. "My idea of the gloominess of Shylock's character," he wrote three years afterwards, "was overstrained, probably more from seeing other players perform it than from the text of Shakspere. Mr. Kean's manner is much nearer the mark." The higher philosophy of the dramatist in this play, in fact, was now made manifest, and doubtless added strength to the movement which resulted in the removal of Jewish disabilities. That the stage should have had a share in that triumph of common sense is, I think, a matter of earnest congratulation.

THE EAGLES AND THE CARCASE.

BY CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

THE dramatic world has been startled during the month by the munificent and magnificent offer of a thousand pounds deliberately and unostentatiously promised in furtherance of some feasible scheme for regenerating the drama. Now that is the very first point to consider. Here is Mrs.

Pfieffer, a lady of excellent taste and discretion, who, weary of all this endless discussion about what ought to be done, and what so-and-so might do, and what Paris has brought to perfection, and what Germany meditates, comes forward and emphatically practises what she preaches. She places a cheque for a thousand pounds on the table, and without hesitation asks someone to cover it. This is really what it comes to, and it is refreshing to find so estimable a lady, who not only has the courage of her opinions, but the wherewithal to back them in so complete and businesslike a manner. For, to tell the truth, theory was becoming just a little wearisome. Everyone had his or her views. We saw the result of the Comédie Française without its blemishes; we knew what had been done at Weimar, and promised at many a small and intellectual German court ; we admired the culture and the varied intelligence of the society that is to be found at Dusseldorf, but at the time that Mrs. Pfieffer made her offer and attempted to bring matters to a practical result there was no unanimity of opinion as to what ought to be done at home to further the advancement of the intellectual drama. One was for State subvention pure and simple, little thinking of the dictatorship of public opinion, the wagging tongue of the Philistine taxpayer, the letters in the extreme Radical papers, the power of the vestryman-order of intellect, and the incessant complaints of the superficial critic. The men who have the effrontery to jeer at the existing civil servant, who sneer at him because he is paid out of the public purse, who flout him and scoff at him because, doing his duty to the best of his ability and honourably, he is content with a modest but certain remuneration in exchange for a respectable livelihood—would these be the men to tolerate a State-subsidied theatre that had high aims and ambitions? Would the reformers who grumble because the enormous machinery of the State requires clerks, and who grudge the remuneration of tenpence an hour, tolerate for one moment a theatre whose salary-list was paid out of the public funds ? What a checking and adjusting there would be! If an actor of vestrymen failed there would be a clamour for his degradation ; there would be a conflict between Shaksperean students and lovers of East-end melodrama, and seeing that the theatre is frequently half-filled by people who never received a tax-paper, the lovers of the poetical drama would be forced to the wall in order to gratify a taste for *Jack Sheppard* or *The Forest of Bondy*. There surely never was a time in which State subvention was more hopeless than now, and it surely was not to advance any such wild and impracticable scheme that the offer of one thousand pounds was made. If it were possible to discover in the maze and labyrinth of human ingenuity a scheme more impracticable and impossible than one in which State officials were to reassume their wand of office and surround a free drama with the hindrances of officialism and pedantry ; if it ever possessed the human brain to conceive a more hopeless muddle than a State theatre affiliated to South Kensington, and exposed to the insult of amateurishness that disfigures most State-conducted art, it would be the plan, boldly proposed by an actor, of a theatre managed by a committee of actors and actresses. Here is a lively proposition ! The Kilkenny cats certainly did leave on each side a vestige of a tail, but the actors and actresses would leave positively nothing. Conceive the new school and the old school blended on one committee, the represen-

tatives of the teacup-and-saucer drama, as it is called, debating with the howling dervishes, the great artists who whine because they have once in three hours to turn their backs to the audience cheek by jowl with the modern realists who glory in the expression of the back seams of a frock-coat, the geniuses who have never seen a *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, or *Richelieu* except themselves, the devoted students of their art who would gladly kill anyone who ever had a prominent scene, the good-natured women who have so many dodges to get into the middle of the stage and have an idea that the audience never regards anything that occurs outside the centre bull's-eye. Now just imagine all these people working together for the good of the drama. Why, the thing is absolutely impossible. They might mean very well, but would assuredly break down in a week. Each one has naturally a very clear and vivid idea of his or her own importance; but when it is not shared by the public at large, or dramatic associates in particular, why, to put it mildly, a crash is imminent at the very outset. It is not conceivable that anyone interested in the future of dramatic art would invest money on the faith of the visionary schemes of a set of well-disposed actors and actresses. When each one interested in the scheme had manœuvred to play *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Richard*, *Shylock*, *Ophelia*, *Juliet*, *Rosalind*, and *Portia*, the thing would be over. Vanity would be satisfied, but the art, so far as advancement was concerned, would remain precisely where it was before. There is no doubt an alternative, and a valuable one, of a theatre endowed by art-capitalists, managed by a general committee of art, worked for by art-enthusiasts, and inspired by a desire to do good to a generous commonwealth, but the scheme argues an amount of unselfishness and loyalty that are at present extremely visionary. The first thing to be done is to find a "King of men," a genial but emphatic tyrant, a man who protests that he is nothing and yet is everything, a man of cultivated and liberal tastes, who accepts the responsibilities of a ruler but does not forget the charm of a gentleman, a character who pretends to give in to everyone and yet always has his way. He is a difficult man to find, but even the much-boasted *Comédie Française* would become chaos without a Perrin, who combines taste and tact, who can tame a Sarah Bernhardt and yield to the inflexible dogmas of a Got, and who can drive a team containing such refractory horses as Coquelin, Mounet-Sully, and Delaunay, each with his particular views and ambitions. It is not a bed of roses, the post of an Emile Perrin, and scarcely a week passes but he has to adjust some ridiculous squabble in this fraternity of holy and undivided art.

But seeing the almost overwhelming difficulties that stand in the path of an organization that shall meet the views of so many deserving and excellent people, it was strange to observe how the eagles gathered round the carcase of that generous thousand pounds. The visionary and airy reformers who had talked in the coolest manner possible of appropriating the time-honoured funds of Drury Lane and Covent Garden naturally demanded a slice of the cake. No one knew what the views of the donor precisely were; no one realized the advantage of the assistance and the counsels of Prince Leopold, who is predestined as the guide and counsellor of universal art; there were only

the thousand pounds on the table, and not an individual soul had eovered one farthing, when up suddenly started a score of hungry applicants for the dole. Every forlorn and impossible venture hoped to revive under the promise of this spurt of generosity; the Stratford-on-Avon enthusiasm flickered with a ray of hope, and it was positively believed that the Dramatic College at Woking might be relieved of a burden of never-ending difficulty. Think, then, what virtue there is in a thousand pounds. At the mere sight of it people were led to believe that a school of dramatic art could be established in the heart of provincial England; that the mere local fact of Shakspere's birthplace would make actors and actresses oblivious of their own interests; and that a library on the banks of the Avon would supersede the value of the British Museum for Shaksperean students. Nay, more, it was seerely hoped that a generous outburst of faith in the cause of the drama would result in the re-endowment of the alms-houses that impinge upon the property of the South Western Railway and the London Necropolis Company. Still, for all that, we do not conceive that Mrs. Pfeiffer had Stratford-on-Avon or Woking in her mind's eye when she guaranteed a thousand pounds for the advancement of dramatic art.

The most sensible and feasible proposition has come from Mr. John Hare, of the St. James's Theatre. We must walk before we run, and the first thing to be done is to establish a dramatic school. The present material is all very well, but there are no reserves to draw upon. Education is the order of the day, and the stage cannot afford to be behindhand in this respect. At present there is no academy from which promising actors and actresses can be drawn; there is no place to which young ambition can go in order to be taught the merest rudiments of histrionic art. The provincial school is over. The theatres of the provinces are filled with offshoots from the London theatres; where, then, is the young actor or actress to go in order to learn? As education spreads, our audiences become more and more shocked at the ignorance that is unfolded before them. The most ordinary French word is indifferently pronounced, and there is a hopeless indifference as to the ordinary rules of emphasis. Blank verse is a hopeless muddle of inconsequence. Not one actor in a dozen can speak a Shaksperean speech intelligently, or has the faintest idea of reading a page of poetry with appreciation and feeling. But that is a small matter. As a rule, very few young actors understand the value of prose composition, the meaning of words, or the balance of sentences. This false emphasis and ridiculous articulation offend the ear. We have one Vezin, one Mead, and one Ryder to a score of blunderers, who make mineameat of their text, and apparently do not understand the derivation or meaning of the most ordinary words. Half the young men on the stage at present should go back to school and be taught to read. They should attend the class-room and study English literature in order to acquire style. It is useless putting good work before them, for they do not understand it; but somehow or other they must reform, or the results of School Boards and University extensions will drive them into a corner. Shakspere is taught now at school, and is not acquired in after-life; and the pits and galleries of the future will not tolerate false emphasis and faulty accentuation. Mr. Hare proposes to change all this by education, and he is very right. Before we teach we must be taught, and it is easy to see at a glance the advantages

of a highly-educated and cultured dramatic nursery. Courses of lectures by professors of various branches of art, libraries of costume and reference, lessons in fencing and deportment, and a theatre with practical instruction, would be of immense and immediate advantage. Young and old could attend the lectures and consult the books, and periodically there could be given a performance of the promising academy pupils from whose ranks selections would be made by the managers of London and the provincial theatres. Derby-winners are purchased at the sale of yearlings, and why should not our Irvings, Bancrofts, Hares, and Kendals find genius in the performance of young academy students. The first thing we want is an academy. To that end all energies ought to be directed, and all capital employed. The subvented and special theatre will come when it is wanted, but education is the crying want at this moment. This once started, innumerable advantages would speedily follow.

SECRETS OF RECENT "SUCCESSES."

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

THIS secret is often found as hard to discover as the philosopher's stone. It is but a vulgar solution to attribute dramatic successes to caprice or accident; but there can be little doubt that the secret of the secret can be often attributed to the profit made by a sagacious mind out of an opportunity which caprice or accident has offered. No one has more of such opportunity than the skilful manager, and nothing is so remarkable as the difference between such a director and one who brings to his task merely the vulgar advantages of abundant capital, sumptuous mounting, decoration, and even dramatic talent. "Hitting the taste" of the town, gently leading it, or boldly inoculating it with a new one, are the only methods; and the sagacity is shown, as in the case of the skilful physician, in finding out what treatment must be followed. The recent fall of a leviathan manager who attempted to direct three theatres—a sort of dramatic Whiteley—on trading principles, is an excellent lesson, and the number of noble lords and theatrical ladies who have disastrously attempted management, an instructive warning. The manager *nascitur non fit*, his gifts seem akin to the sort of instinct possessed like the late Admiral Rous, who was a judge not so much of horses as of horse-racing. So with an experienced ship captain who knows what his vessel can do, and the skilled manager has this marvellous and indescribable sense of what his public will do. No doubt the faculty is based on a minute observation of details which leads him to a larger experience.

As may be imagined, there have been very few successful managers, though there are plenty of managers that have been successful. Garrick took over Drury Lane when it was in a most disastrous condition, and during about forty years worked it up to a pitch of prosperity that can only be compared with that of the "French Comedy" at the present day. Sheridan, who succeeded him, was not a manager at all; neither was John nor Charles Kemble, nor Macready. It may be doubted whether Charles Kean had any real managerial capacity, but as a manager he was successful for a time. It

is not pretended that Macready was more than a great actor. Mr. Harris, of Covent garden, had certainly the true instinct. Mr. Tate Wilkinson, Mr. Harris Foote, Mr. Arnold, and many more, were all of the true line. Coming to our own time, the late Mr. Bateman was one of the most marked individual instances of good managerial capacity, working under great difficulty and discouragement, while it is unnecessary to mention the tact and talent which have made the Prince of Wales's Theatre what it is. So with Mr. Hare and the Court. These are, in some degree, fashionable houses, but the few mistakes that have been made show that the least relaxation of vigilance is sure to entail disaster. No *prestige* will induce the public to go and see what they do not like. Neither will any amount of "puffing" or celebrity have that effect. A good play, too, will not attract where it is badly acted, nor the finest and most finished acting where there is a bad play.

Now, the present year has been marked by nearly half-a-dozen successes of the most money-drawing character. To balance these there have been some failures and even *flasques* of a tremendous character. Some of these have, in the expressive French slang, *crevèd*, that is, on their production, seem to have "burst" and blown up, and left only a sort of wreck and fragments for the bewildered audience to look at. We wonder, as do the "undertakers" and all concerned, after the event, how such things had been brought forward, for it would not appear to have been discovered until the catastrophe itself that the things had no shape or coherence, or were any thing beyond a collection of elements. But for the successes, it might not be difficult to trace some sort of law, or to find sound reasons for so happy an issue. The first reflection that will suggest itself is, that no purely English work save one has had anything approaching what our neighbours call a "pyramidal success." Neither drama nor spectacle nor burlesque nor comedy has what has called drawn the town. *Our Boys* is, perhaps, the most conspicuous exception, and a comic opera, which, though by English workmen, is built on French lines and after French models. These genuine successes then are :—

1. *Les Cloches de Corneville*, now drawing on to its 600th performance.
2. *H.M.S. Pinafore*, near its 500th representation.
3. *Madame Favart*, which will, probably, reach the same length of nights.
4. *The New Babylon*.

These are what may be called successes on a substantial, assured basis ; for at this moment, I believe, there are no signs of flagging or waning. *Hamlet* has had an extraordinary run if it be not profane to use such a word ; but it may be accepted that the "divine Williams" has by this time secured success when interpreted by an actor of the first rank and when brought out in a dignified and becoming manner.

First, then, for *Les Cloches*, which it must be recollectcd has, like *Madame Angot*, *La Grande Duchesse*, *La Belle Hélène*, and two or three more of the same order, a European success. This at once shows its authors have a power not local or national, but general, and that they know how to touch sympathies belonging to all theatrical audiences indifferently. Its first merit is in the story, charming and artistically wrought ; simple, and yet

most interesting. Here English writers might take a lesson, and dismiss that notion of realism which has been the cramp and bane of modern dramatic efforts, viz., the assumption that only what passes before us in average life is to be presented. This is what makes modern drama so stupid. We should go to the theatre to see what we cannot see in the average dull life, to be brought into the presence of new and surprising incidents, which might happen, but which we are not likely to be fortunate enough to encounter. Here the story of village life, the jealousies of Serpolette and Germaine, the strange, weird old miser, the old castle of Mrs. Radcliffe's construction, the pretended ghosts, the hoards of money, the humour of the baillie, and rustic life, are all blended into an exceedingly pretty and interesting story that moves on with animation : which is improbable enough, though quite possible ; though the improbability is only owing to the modern prosaic shape of life, or civilization, which makes *business* supreme, and leaves no room for romance without profit. Such a little imbroglio might have occurred in a place where the business of subsistence was assured, and where there was therefore opportunity for such little intrigues. The incident of the dressing-up as ghosts of the old ancestors of the castle, and thus scaring the old miser at his hoards, is truly dramatic ; the undereurrent of tragic seriousness, which ordinary burlesque-writers would fancy was wholly out of keeping, and a burlesque itself actually leads straight to the comic position ; for thus are the two elements blended in actual life. This is merely touched on now, but it belongs to the art of dramatic effect so profoundly understood and carried out by our neighbours. The same effect was produced in a piece of Sardou's, *Le Roi Carotte*, where, in the midst of much satirical humour, the scene shifts to Pompeii, we think, and in the solemn solitude of the ruins the comic passages seemed to be rebutted by the appearance of the shades of the old Romans, in their habit, as they lived, solemnly going through their banquets and other rites, and disturbed by these intruders. Again, the *characters* of the personages are admirably discriminated, notably those of the two girls and the baillie, and the other comic personages are pleasantly humorous. That of the returning lord of the manor is distinct and interesting. The *situations*, too, how piquant, without effort or obtrusion !

Les Cloches, in short, is a *story*, and a story that interests ; it has *characters* ; it is bright and full of an amiable pastoral humour ; the situations, though exaggerated, are not extravagant ; the music is piquant, dramatic, and taking, or "fetching," as it would now be called. Witness the little dramatic scene of the "Ding-dong, ding-dong Bell," which is the key-note of the whole. Then there is the highly-important element of good acting. Mr. Sheil Barry's Miser, though somewhat languid in parts, is of the school of Lemaître, full of force as well as of finish, and with that poetical glamour over all which is found in so few impersonations of the kind. Miss Katherine Monro, the original Serpolette, gave it a grace, variety, and intelligence, —compared with her, those who succeeded appeared to be lay figures. Mr. Hill's Baillie was in the unctuous French vein of fooling. Mr. Righton the part does not suit so well. With such elements it is not difficult to explain its success.

H.M.S. Pinafore has, it is needless to remind ourselves, been a *succès fou*. At first it certainly hung fire, and on the first representation seemed even flat. This was owing to the too-laborious spirit in which it was presented, possibly from over-preparation, and from the humour not being understood. It is certainly now a highly-humorous production, airy and trifling, perhaps, and with some pedantic bits, which are Mr. Gilbert's weakness—such as the change of dress at the end, and the notion that the Captain is to say, "If you please!" The Bum-boat Woman is indeed incomprehensible as to the point intended. But, in spite of this, the music is so sprightly, the jests are so light and airy, that the whole floats along before the brisk wind, cutting through the water. And here it is to be noted that two or three really good things that the public can appropriate, quote again and again, or sing at its work, is a highly important secret of the secret of success. Even a single song, as in the case of "Old Dog Tray," has drawn the town, people taking it with them, as it were, and hearing it chaunted, begin to regard the whole piece with favour. So with the *Pinafore*, one expression, "hardly ever," has become part of a daily expression, and, with the "sisters, cousins and his aunts," and the devout account of his rise given by the First Lord, are sufficient to make the whole diverting and attractive. A new humorous idea, with which the public stock of harmless pleasure is increased, the public is rejoiced to find, and is put in better humour even outside the walls of the theatre. Any person with a sense of humour must be tickled with the pleasant boast of the Captain before all his crew, that he is "never, never ill at sea," and their gravely-expressed and respectful doubt in the interest of truth, "What, never?" and the Captain's still confident repetition, "Never!" the crew's reaffirmation, delicately offered, to give him a chance of reconsidering the matter, and the Captain's reluctant admission, "Well, hardly ever!" All this, without being of the very highest class, is decidedly genuine, agreeable, and amusing. A happy bit of satire is found in the praise given to the person who, "in spite of all temptations, to belong to other nations, remains an Englishman!" And the sound advice of the First Lord, to "stick to your desks and never go to sea, and you'll be the chief of the Queen's navy." These strokes all recur as we walk about, put us in a state of high complacency, extract ever a smile, and thus make the "success" a real tangible thing and not a matter of advertisement. What really gives a piece a run—the direct operative force, that is—will be found to consist in "cruizers," that is, in persons who were pleased themselves sending others to have the same enjoyment. This is mostly done indirectly at dinners and clubs, where the praise of some induces others to go and see for themselves. It may be added that the later scenery, since the migration to the Olympic, is truly artistic and poetical,—of the Telbin school, which is very different from the "mustard and lobster salads," which now pass for scenery, and which are painted up to suit the glare of the electric fierce gas-lighting.

To account for the startling success of *Our Boys*, unexampled too, is a more perplexing matter. But, at the same time, no better illustrations of what is called "hitting the public taste" could be found. Here the matter is offered under the least distracting considerations, it being a question of taste or

fancy in its simplest shape. The public could say, "It's my humour; I like it." Mr. Byron himself would admit that he never dreamed of its acquiring such a hold, of its having such "a potentiality of becoming popular beyond the dreams of dramatic hope." His *Cyril's Success* is a far better and more important piece. In fact, but for one actor, whom the leading character admirably suited, it might have fallen flat; for, save for the excellent "Butterman," Perkins Middlewick, his "*prime Dosset*," &c., it was otherwise a thin piece, with the "cherries on one stalk," two amiable young ladies and their two admirers, who somehow find their way into every one of the author's plays. How familiar are the pattern and the mode of treatment; the characters always the same, the superior sarcastic man, whose gentle retorts seem to overwhelm with a confusion utterly disproportioned to their strength, the vulgar, the forward, the insolent; a theory that is certainly not supported by experience. The vulgar man has nowadays sense and wit enough to know, in his own phrase, "the ropes," and is just as likely to put down the coldly-sarcastic man with some rough, well-directed hit. And who, "in society," ventures to make such speeches? The mode of "down-putting" favoured by ladies and gentlemen of fashion is cool ignoring, overlooking and haughty silence.

The Butterman, then, abstracted, not much was left, and, it may be added, Mr. James himself abstracted, the Butterman would have been little. In the latest Byron-piece we find just such another character allotted to Mr. Anson, whom it scarcely fits. One of the secrets, I believe, of this most remarkable success is this, the Butterman was not merely a character displaying his eccentricities, but that he and his eccentricities were *dramatic*, and developed the story of the play. The story itself reacted on him. It must be said, too, that the character is highly humorous, and the situation of the prosperous tradesman in the baronet's house thinking to make himself of importance by friendly suggestious, drawn from his own experience of trade, is humorous; but, then, how old this tune scraped again on many a wretched fiddle, and by good and bad players! Finally, it must be repeated it was a character which nine out of ten of our modern parts are not—they are merely profiles in card,—and, indeed, what else should they be? How few have made a study of human character, observing its laws in daily life, discriminating what is essential and common to all, and what merely local. Those who profess to be most familiar with *les planches* really only copy the old stage types and common forms.

Madame Favart is another of the successes which Mr. Henderson, has exploited. That skilful manager has the gift of selection, and, as was said, goes a great deal upon touching the chord of sympathy. The heroine in this piece, Miss St. John, is sympathetic to a remarkable degree, and from the first night secured the audiences. Another actress possessed of this mysterious and valuable influence is Kate Vaughan, whose strange grace, in the few tranquil movements she gives, has more effect than the *entrechats* of the most muscular. Mrs. Scott Siddons—full of intellect, with a fine presence, and beautiful face—is totally devoid of this power, and the audience look on but with cold respect at her exertions. Miss Ada Cavendish, too, with otherwise much power as an actress, is

deficient in this. Miss Lydia Thompson, Mr. Henderson's sheet-anchor, has the gift to an extraordinary degree. He can choose, too, even in the broadest burlesque, such as "Blue Beard,"—actors that make the burlesque intelligent, *i.e.*, directed by a sort of intellectual and coherent purpose, not as is too often the case, making it a mere medley of tunes, dances, and buffoonery. To him we owe the series of bright, tuneful operettas, well brought out with singers, who can sing with sentiment, and the difference can be appreciated when we recall the extraordinary "mingle-mangle," such as *Vert-Vert* and *Chilperic*, produced in a raw style and done by "literal rogues," who took everything *au grand sérieux* and in a Caledonian spirit.

The *New Babylon*, last in our list, does not pretend to be more than a panorama of London life, scenes of bustle and pleasure. A dozen Royal personages, it is stated, have been to see it. No need, therefore, to analyze its elements of success.

STAGE-MANAGEMENT.

BY ROBERT REECE.

THE art of "Stage-Management can only be acquired by long experience, and nothing is more to be deplored than the modern practice of allowing an author to direct his plays. *His proper place is in a private box, where he can watch the performance and make such alterations in the MS. as the stage-manager shall suggest.*" It may seem incredible, but these are the very words of a letter written to me five years since by a well-known manager, at that time presiding over a theatre not a day's march from Leicester-square. The monstrous absurdity of the statements contained in this quotation, and the triumphant refutation of its argument by subsequent productions wholly under the control of the authors themselves, suggested to me that a few remarks on the subject of Stage-Management might not be out of place at this Table. Take the writer's first proposition:—"Stage-Management can only be acquired by experience."

I contend that the art of stage-management is a "gift;" an unusual one, I own, but none the less a direct gift, or inspiration; to be assisted, perhaps, by experience, but never to be perfunctorily acquired. It is as competent for a dramatist to superintend and "stage-manage" his first production, and make it, from that point of view, successful, as it is assuredly competent for a merely experienced manager to mould it into a failure. And by "experienced manager" I do not mean a manager of experience plus the gift of stage-management, but merely the functionary my plain words suggest, who may have produced a hundred pieces and rehearsed them *after a fashion*, and according to his own stereotyped conceptions of fitness, without having once exhibited that consummate nicely and finish which may be observable in even an early work produced under the entire direction of its author; such author, let it be understood, being the happy recipient of the gift of stage-management.

Further, I will affirm, the notion that experience—or lengthened association with any art—implies an appreciation of it is fallacious. The sort of experience which is valuable in a watchmaker, for instance, is not of much service in art; by the argument quoted an author's success as a writer of novels or plays should increase as his catalogue becomes more extended, whereas the reverse is only too frequently the rule: the poet, the painter, the musician, the sculptor, the dramatist, and the actor may, respectively, be familiar with their professions, and skilled in mere technicalities, but unless the “divine *ictus*” impel them, the result, in each case, is an apparent perfunctoriness, which, though perhaps unassailable on the point of accuracy, never rises to the condition that compels admiration. The “experience” of a stage-manager which goes no further than to assist him in decorous “exits” and the “nice conduct” of a stage-mob is about as valuable as the art of the compositor at the printing-press, to whose manipulation is due the neat appearance of type, but who feels nothing of the literary beauties he may be called upon to “set-up.”

If nothing else has been accomplished for the drama's sake nowadays, the confidence of managers in the intelligence of dramatists is, at least, established. The stage-manager of most theatres is now a hybrid character partaking of the functions of call-boy and prompter; and it is a fact that he occasionally is engaged to act as well. On the author, and on the author alone, rests the tremendous responsibility of seeing his own ideas carried out *secundum artem*; he looks (if he be the man whose type I am adducing here) to *every item* that may make a point in his work. He delivers a “scene-plot,” a “property-plot,” and a delineation of any unusual or difficult mechanical arrangement before he reads his play; he will have probably inspected the models furnished to him by the conscientious “scenic-artist,” to whom he will have confided the necessary hints as to architecture and design relative to the period of the piece. He will have had interviews with the costumier, and after a stormy and stubborn engagement with that wrongheaded person have rationally settled the proper dresses and accoutrements; he will have explained to the gasfitter that gasliers were not in general use in, say the fifteenth century; he will, finally, have looked to an infinity of detail which ought not to be overlooked, and he is then prepared to put the company in possession of what are known and flippantly entitled, “the words of the piece.” I have never known a stage-manager do all this, or a third part of it.

These are the author's first dealings in “Stage-management.” Now, it is obvious to any intelligent person that the man who can write a good drama must, of necessity, see its action and embellishments in his mind's eye. If he be not the proper person to direct the carrying-out of his notions, I fail to discover who *is*; he may not, at first, be glib in the jargon of the stage-carpenter (it is easily acquired), but he can see, or he is no dramatist, what tends to or opposes the interest and fitness of his play. Is it conceivable that anybody else should realize the creation of a brain so well as the creator?

Be it remembered, that throughout I am taking the two instances of an author who possesses “stage-management,” and a manager who is merely

"experienced." Of course, an author *may* construct a capital play, and yet be destitute of the ability of putting it on the stage ; but I should say that author was a *rara avis* with a vengeance. As a rule, the man who has the gift of constructing a play has, cognate with that gift, its very twin, stage-management to back it.

If I cared to be personal I could relate a good many instances of "experienced" managers whose suggestions overruled the modest convictions of young authors, and helped them to failure. There are scores of veteran actors who could not stage-manage an ordinary farce. There are scores of country octogenarians who are not as sharp as a seven-year-old London boy. Amongst the first troubles of the stage-manager (I am taking the *author* now) is the first rehearsal. He has absolutely to start the action of the play, and at *his* word, and none else's, the clumsy machinery of the play-acting begins to move. It is inchoate, crude, raw, unpromising enough ; but *now* comes the magic touch. In a few gestures, a rapid sketch of action, the gist of the incident entry or exit is revealed ; the shrewd artist catches the tone, sees and values the situation, and a bit of stage-management has been done, which when the play is played will command the applause of the discerning public.

It is impossible to overrate the touches of business which tell on a play. Who can forget that delightful exit of the nursemaid in *Society* when, as she wheels her charges off, the tall soldier silently joins her ? It was, in its way, a stroke of art ; it was, at least, a reproduction of nature. That was real stage-management. The successful accomplishment of a difficult sensation-scene is not stage-management, it is merely the successful accomplishment of a difficult sensation-scene.

I am not proposing to write an essay on stage-management, or to give "six easy lessons" in the art ; I am merely discursively touching on the fast-fading fallacy concerning authors as directors of their works, and the splendid bigotry which clings to stark experience in theatrical routine. The voice of contemporary authors will be for my argument, not because it flatters their conceit, but because it is capable of proof. From first to last the author is now responsible (as he should be) for the safe conduct of his play ; he, and he alone, should be unwearied and ubiquitous ; he alone must look to the minutiae, the *nuances*, the proprieties of the drama. May I add, the proper pronunciation of foreign or classical words, without giving offence to the "experienced" stage-managers ? with whom an awful false quantity, or Whitechapel-French is of less importance than getting a "border" straight for the gallery. If an established author nowadays permits a play of his to be mounted and staged without his permission and supervision in every detail he deserves to see it fail, where these points of ordinary perfection of detail should be beyond reach of failure.

Mr. Byron, Mr. Burnand, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Boucicault, Mr. Tom Taylor, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. H. B. Farnie, and Mrs. Bancroft are born stage-managers. If I omit other worthy names it is because I cannot speak with authority of their gifts, *i.e.*, I have never seen them stage-manage a play.

As to the situation of the author "in a private box," for the exalted

rôle of looking after the “experienced” stage-manager’s corrections in the MS., I quote it for the purpose of affording to my readers the same opportunity for a sardonic grin that it granted me; I should very much like to see Mr. Gilbert accepting the situation for the stage-manager’s sake.

MANAGERS AND PLAYS.

By WILLIAM TIREBUCK.

TO those who have watched the affairs of our metropolitan theatres from a critic’s rather than a placid playgoer’s point of view it must be apparent that of late there has been little evidence of any new power in dramatic authorship in our midst, and that on the other hand there has been abundant evidence that the old powers, for the present at least, are exhausted. We have long been standing still, long been playing upon a few select and well-known, but surely rather favoured recorders—recorders whose stops have emitted very much the same kind of tones, except when a sensational tune from a foreign source has been forced through them. We have had original native comedies, sometimes approaching, in one extreme, farce; and sometimes, in another extreme, drama; and, in addition, we have had numerous adaptations from the French. Native authorship has given us wit and repartee, and foreign authorship has given us situation and effect. It is a long time since we had the two qualities combined, and accompanied by something essentially English in the way of vigour and strength. This refers to comedy. Whether an Englishman will ever write tragedy that will allure certain managers from the Elizabethan and a much more recent period a little, seems just now very doubtful. What is the cause of this? Has dramatic instinct deserted us for the remainder of this century, and left us to the weak monotony of borrowing from over the Channel? It would seem so, and yet the age that is rife with remarkable novelists who have notions of dramatic interest, situation, and analysis of individuality—and, if need be, poetical individuality—ought, one would think, have some connection with dramatists. Not that one is the necessary outcome of the other, but there is, nevertheless, a literary affinity; and heights in novel-writing have been reached which suggest the possible proximity of the other.

Are then, highly creditable, yea, even powerful plays lost to us owing to no fault of the writers? May not the present arrangements of managers repel rather than invite and encourage entirely new effort? Is, in short, the stage as approachable to new writers as in the interest of dramatic art it ought to be? I put the suggestion in this form to avoid appearing dogmatic. I do not say that unknown Shaksperes, Jonsons, Sheridans, and Goldsmiths are actually languishing in obscurity; I only suggest that a worthy Will, Ben, Brinsley, or Oliver may be among some of the MSS. that managers receive, but pass in favour of known handwriting. The managers may with one accord justify this course on the grounds of security and business. They would rather endure the ills they

have—for they have ills, even with known names—than fly to others they now not of. Granted it must be that the production of a new play by an unknown writer, as matters are now, is a more serious undertaking than producing work from a tested hand. But, in a better condition of affairs, the difference in risk would not be so great. Managers, for example, ought in any case to accept the work, and not the writer. They ought to be self-assured as to the merits of things about them, be the authors who they may. This may sound like common common-place, and vacant chaff well-meant for grain ; but in the face of what the stage has recently done, how are we to be satisfied that they are always so assured ? Do they not, by their conduct, virtually commission well-known writers to produce too much, and leave the works of new men untested, even to the extent of being unread ? It is, of course, borne in mind that the new play, with unquestionable merit off, may not prove a success on, the stage. Stage-success has so many conditions of its own, has so much to do with actors, and is so dependent upon current public feeling, that speculation and risk must attend, to a certain extent, the production of every new work. But I believe that if managers were a little more critical in their selections, and with a wider range to select from, and trusted less to the chapter of accidents, the stage would not suffer as many humiliations as it has suffered in the way of admittedly weak work.

Modern managerial engagements I will own, are certainly very complex. So entirely are the directors of stage affairs absorbed in the business of producing, that they have not, perhaps, opportunities for properly selecting. It will not, therefore, I hope, be looking too much into other people's business to suggest that they ought to employ a person for the task. If this appointment, alone, would be too much a sinecure, other duties in connection with the stage, and requiring knowledge, culture, and literary acumen could be added. Why should there not be a theatrical manager's reader as well as a publisher's reader, that unobtrusive MS. worm known to the public only by the name of his eminent firm ? This may, to a limited extent, already be done in some theatres, but it cannot be as systematic and genuine as circumstances now require. There were days, primitive days of strolling-players, when the proprietor, manager, stage-carpenter, and scene-painter were combined in the one wonderful individual ; but expansion necessitated the division of labour, and in due course these departments have become to be represented by tens rather than by units.

The theatrical profession more than ever expanded, now requires another addition, an auxiliary to do justice to a department so important that it affects the standard of national plays ; and not only this, but the pockets of managers, for the sooner their art by its all-round excellence recommends itself to general support, the sooner will those people, who at present, on sometimes false and sometimes justified ground, turn their backs on the theatre, join the army of playgoers. It is true that professional readers as well as managers may become negligent, indifferent, and may indeed become the favourers of a few names, but the manager can at least hold his servant up to his duty, though he neglect or corrupt his own. Professional readers, too, would not be infallible. They would also be liable to errors of judg-

ment, but care of reputation and position would make them watchful, with this advantage to new playwrights, playgoers, and dramatic literature, that more works would be put to a reasonable test, instead of accumulating dust in the mysterious chambers of the stage. The single reader would be more capable of good government than, say, a specially-organized committee of able judges to whom writers could submit works and to whom managers could apply for likely material for their market, both paying commission for the accommodation. It would also be better than establishing middle-men—brokers—in dramatic literature who could supply managers with works from the uproarious farce to the breathless tragedy, all as guaranteed as the patent medicines. We want men who, irrespective of manager, author, critic, and playgoer, will honestly read and pronounce an opinion upon new material submitted, on which opinion the managers can act as they, from a business-point—for it must always in the end come to this—think best. We want art more adequately represented in the now gigantic business of the stage, and the professional manager's reader might be elected as its jealous representative and advocate.

THE CALVERT MEMORIAL PERFORMANCE.

BY HERMAN MERIVALE.

MR. TAYLOR, in his capital speech at the parting Manchester festivity, wherein in the character of Adam he returned thanks for mankind, simply and truly described Mr. Calvert, the late theatre manager, as one who “conceived his function worthily.” It is a pity that there are so few such, so few who regard theatrical management as involving any duty except to their own pockets, and who do not think that duty most safely performed by the production of translations from the French, where they imagine they can be sure of their ground. Hence the outcry about the lack of native dramatists, as it was and is and ever shall be. No wonder that outsiders should raise it, when they are flooded with these detestable imports one after another. With the Garricks, and Sheridans, and Macreadys, and men of that stamp of culture at the manager's helm, English playwrights have not been wanting. Only it asks intelligence to find them out, judgment to consider their plays, and confidence to produce them. The qualities that make a worthy manager do not go with the lease of a theatre.

Charles Calvert seems, by all accounts, to have been one in a thousand; and he was a loss to London. A genuine Shaksperean, an enthusiastic antiquarian, and a straightforward and honourable man, he raised the function he conceived so well. I do not know what he did, or that he ever did much, in the production of new plays. But that is only one side of the business. The old English drama is a rich field which can never be worked to exhaustion, though there, again, judgment and selection are necessary. Plays are not good because they are old.

Not all the king's horses, nor all the king's men
Can put Mr. Farquhar together again.

Leave him on his shelf, Mrs. Robertson ; you who play these old comedies so well. Goldsmith and Sheridan will be potent spells to the end of time, but Farquhar is a spirit of a different sort. He has been dead long enough to exempt us from the duty of saying *nil nisi bonum* of him ; and at whatever cost to my own character I will here record my deliberate opinion that Farquhar was an ass, and an exceeding coarse-minded person besides. If, "dying he had put on the weeds of Dominic," he might be forgiven ; but, as Mr. Clement Scott truly told us, he said and wrote unsavoury things on his deathbed ; and though wit may sometimes excuse unsavouriness, unsavouriness maketh not wit. And Farquhar, unlike the compeers with whom he has by some mistake got his comedies bound, thought, like some modern story-tellers, that to be coarse was in itself to be witty.

But my pen carries me into intolerable digressions, and this has nothing to do with Calvert or with Manchester. Our Shakspere, whatever he needs for his honoured bones, gets very little rest, for he lives on under chronic conditions of revival. Nobody ever revived him better than Calvert, with a truer taste or with a sounder knowledge. I have before my eyes, as I write, the picture of the drinking-bout in *Twelfth Night*, as I saw it at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester, with the characteristic figures of the topers that filled the stage, and the solid staircase and gallery which made the background of the scene. It was a worthy and a well-chosen tribute to the manager's memory to act *As You Like It* in his honour. Oh, that play ! that chrysolite of a play ! that entire and perfect, and loveworthy fairy-tale ! For a sylvan fairy-tale it essentially is, belonging to no country but Utopia, to no period but fairy-time. Was not Touchstone by name a Briton, Orlando an Italian, Le Beau a Frenchman, Celia a romantic, Jaques an anything ? And were they not all just pixies, and no more ?

I believe, myself, that Shakspere wrote the part of Rosalind, in a prophetic dream, for Helen Faucit. I will not call her Miss, and I will not call her Mrs. Martin. There never can have been such another. She is all Rosalind. The sweet round voice, the statuesque and gracious attitudes, the perfect tenderness of conception, and the sustained tone of the *grande dame de par le monde*, as Brantôme has it, who never forgets her royalty for a moment in the lovely garnish of a boy, all these things go together to make a thing to be remembered of Helen Faucit's Rosalind. If I speak of myself, I own that the temptation to join in the revels, for me, was that I might be able to say and know that I had once enacted Touchstone with the Rosalind who was charming London when I was born. Dates ! they are meaningless to those whom the gods love, who die young, as a wise man once said, because they grow not old. The abiding charm of the Faucit's Rosalind is its perfect ladyhood. And that fairy princess must be either a lady throughout, playing at the saucy lackey without a doublet and hose in her disposition, or the veriest and most forward minx who ever swaggered, one who would never have been fathered by that fine old Duke, or loved by the manful Orlando. If we that played with her shall not forget Helen Faucit, I do not think that she will forget her greeting from that crowded theatre, nor the other spontaneous tribute which, when the curtain had fallen, all those who had played in the comedy with her came

forward to give her hand and heart. It was an unrehearsed effect, but a fine one. Most of all, perhaps, she will remember the burst of applause which, in the cold grey daylight of rehearsal, answered in spite of us to one of those human touches which she threw into the sweet Princess whom she understands so well. What is the use or criticism at all, when all is said? An actor or an actress has this or that fault, drags the time, is "unnatural" (meaning, thereby, very often, that his or her nature is not the same as the critic's, on the old principle of "orthodoxy is my doxy"), and so forth; and then comes something which strikes right upon the sensitive chord which runs down our human backs, and discussion ends.

Helen Faucit was the performance, the beginning and the end. None the less, to finish with, let us of the improvised company toast "our noble selves" in a minor key. First to our Rosalind the second (for we had two, one for each night), who was the heartiest in the house in her applause of the first. A pretty Princess Miss Wallis made, and her woman's dress was a picture, a marked improvement on the funny old fashion of attiring Rosalind in full evening costume to see the wrestling in the garden. Surely that must have happened by daylight, Agricultural Halls being yet unknown. Not that I would quarrel with Helen Faucit's quaint robe, which in her wearing looked part of the fairy tale. Then there was our Celia, our good-natured, sweet-tempered Celia. Shakspere, who wrote everybody, must have been minded to produce an ideal gooseberry-picker when he conceived of that much-enduring maiden. With us, Miss Pattison had burdens to bear undesigned by the poet, as in a lesser degree had Touchstone also, and in a greater poor Orlando, who must have been much overthrown. For we got tremendously mixed about our two Rosalinds; having different things to say and do, and different places to stand in on the two nights, I never had any knowledge till the last moment in what act I was to play, what scene; and as for entrances, the wings being entirely blocked by festive foresters, we used to walk about till we found a place whereby to get on. But we were all on pleasure bent; our Celia bore it like an angel ready-made, and so did I. There was our fine *doyen*, Tom Taylor, an ideal Adam, brimful of Shaksperean enthusiasm, and ready to play every part in the piece. I blame him not, for so was I. Did he not rush upon an eminent painter whom he had never seen before, with a sudden and introductory adjuration of some force to "turn his toes out"? And did not the painter take it in the best possible part, with infinite amusement? There was the banished Duke, a trained amateur who gave a rock-like impression of security, and upset the entire apple-cart in the last scene by forgetting his part, and then looking reproachfully at Touchstone, who thought it must be Jaques, who thought it was Touchstone. Neither of us could have suspected that Dook, till I found him out in the book afterwards. There was Duke Frederick, who forgot to say, "How dost thou, Charles?" as I, Touchstone, knelt over the fallen wrestler. Whereupon, after a pause, I volunteered the information. "He cannot speak, my Lord." "Oh, ah," said his Grace, recalled to a sense of duty, "How dost thou, Charles?" And to my lips, as a dramatist, rose the necessary repartee, "I have just told you, my Lord, that he can't speak; why ask him?" But I crushed it

sternly. There was our Audrey, Mrs. Edward Saker ; such an Audrey,—the best, frankly, I have ever seen, because the only one who rejects turnips and ugliness, and makes of the girl the pretty ignoramus Shakspere drew, and Touchstone loved. “Praised be the gods for thy foulness,” should surely be said with all the proud and amused fondness a lover can feel, which the bored courtier in motley felt at last. Some of his jokes are bad ; but so, alas, are some of many a modern jester’s, who is not paid for making them.

Space fails me to sing of the Waughs, and Wingfields, and Matthisons, and other heroes, and I close. To their excellent Jaques, whose face forbids the thought of “melancholy,” and to the other kindly hosts who gave them of their best without grudging, the players at the Calvert benefit will dedicate an especial memorial-corner. By the writer of these lines, certainly, the visit will be remembered as one of the cheeriest times he ever passed. Ever and anon, at night, various Rosalinds will traverse my chest in dreams, and give me differing directions as to place ; and I am a little afraid to look upon a bottle of champagne. But I know that I have made new friends whom I value and shall not lose. And I hope that with the family of the admirable manager who did much for Manchester, for whom Manchester worthily bestirred herself, there may remain something of a solid benefit, as well as a treasured memory.

Portraits.

XXXII.—MR. GROSSMITH, JUN.,

WAS born on the very evening that his father—*The Times* reporter at Bow-street police-court—began his career as a lecturer. “I went,” Mr. Grossmith, senior, says, “to make my first appearance in public at my native place, Reading, and on returning to town found that my son had made his first appearance in private at his native place.” Intending his son for the bar, Mr. Grossmith, senior, entrusted to him nearly the whole of the reporting, so that he might become acquainted with criminal practice. Mr. Grossmith, jun., however, had a much stronger inclination towards dry humour than dry study, and preferred watching the fingers of the Mr. Parry associated with Mr. and Mrs. German Reed to listening to even the excellent speeches of Parry the serjeant. This inclination not being discouraged by his father, he came out in 1870 at the Polytechnic in a musical entertainment entitled *Human Oddities*, and the late Mr. Oxenford was the first to urge him on his wild career. Mr. Grossmith invented about a dozen of these entertainments, which he gave at provincial Literary and Mechanics’ Institutes, often appearing in conjunction with his father, then, as now, exceedingly popular. For a time the youth joined Mr. and Mrs. Paul, and in 1876 gave an entertainment entitled *Entre Nous* with Miss Marryat. For this he wrote and composed *Cups and Saucers*, since produced at the Opera Comique. In 1877 he received a much-valued letter from Mr. Arthur Sullivan. “Are you,” the composer said, “inclined to go on the stage for a time? There is a part in the new piece I am doing with Gilbert which I think you will play admirably.” The upshot of this was that Mr. Grossmith appeared as John Wellington Wells in *The Sorcerer*, at the Opéra Comique, then in the hands of the Comedy Opéra Company. Every director thereof opposed his engagement, but Mr. Sullivan had his way. The young actor’s success admitted of no doubt. “Mr. Grossmith’s acting of the part, in which he assumes with singular success the aspect of a superior bagman, has,” the *Saturday Review* said, “true original force; and he possesses the talent, far less common in England than in France, of singing correctly, expressively, and pleasantly, without having any particular voice.” He next appeared as the First Lord of the Admiralty in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, in which he is still playing. Mr. Grossmith attributes his success to four professional men. “Firstly,” he once remarked, “to my father, my earliest critic, who always encouraged me when he thought encouragement due, and never fell into the error, common to most parents, of thinking that his son was a duffer or a genius; secondly to Mr. Arthur Cecil, for many valuable suggestions respecting my scenes; lastly to Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan, the former for the pains he has taken on my behalf, and the latter for having given me an opportunity for which I shall ever be grateful to him.” Mr. Grossmith has written *Five Hamlets* and composed many drawing-room comic songs, all distinguished, as his acting is, by very fine humour.



THE THEATRE, NO. 16, NEW SERIES.

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SWEET LITTLE NOLLIE.

BY CLAUD TEMPLAR.

“‘ EITH’ ôphel’ Argous —’” h’m, h’m—‘ mè diaptasthai skaphos.

Oh! all right. Here we are. Looks beastly difficult though, don’t it?” And then, translating rapidly—“‘ Would that the ship Argo had never sailed through —’ Would that she never had indeed! Then I shouldn’t have to construe all this rubbish on a fine summer’s morning; should I? Eh, John Ascot?”

As the six feet odd of beard and sinew I address happens to be my private tutor, crammer and companion rolled into one, and a devoted admirer of the classics, my remark elicits from him no further response than a contemptuous grin and a wave of the hand to proceed.

“‘ Would that the ship Argo,’” I continue, “‘ had never,—I say, John, are you *really* not going to play in the match to-morrow?”

“Would that Ronald Wavertree, Esquire,” returns my tutor, “could stick to his reading for five consecutive minutes! No, I’m *not* going to play to-morrow. I shall finish my article for the *Fortnightly* while you’re gone. Now, Ro, drive on; there’s a good lad.”

Certainly, if I don’t get through my work a little faster than I have been doing just at present I shall never get through Mods next Michaelmas term, and the Dons sat upon me awfully before I turned my back upon Christchurch for the Long. Quoth the Dean: “The fact that you are heir to large estates and a title does not exempt you from the rules of conduct to which we are all subject. You have been leading a very dissipated life here, and unless you pass Moderations next term, you must take your name off the college-books.” So here am I lying full length on Shoalford beach, my face turned towards the low escarpment of the Marine Parade lest the tossing waves and fresh breeze should combine to tempt me out for a sail, and doing my best to make a fair start at the *Medea* of a certain abomination by the name of Euripides.

“‘ Would that the ship Argo,’” I resume, “‘ had never sailed through the straits of —the devil!”

For a moment my eyes had been fixed on my book, my chin resting in both hands, my elbows planted determinedly in the sand, but the gentle *frou-frou* of a passing dress has roused my attention. I have lifted my eyes, and as the wall is on a level with them, and I have not raised my head, I catch a glimpse of the sweetest little pair of shoes, and the nattiest little pair of ankles, encased in the neatest pair of striped stockings I have seen for many a long day. Nothing more.

Nevertheless, I say “the devil!” for if there *is* one thing I admire more than another it is a pretty foot; and I may here observe, by the way, that for the life of me I am unable to understand why a man who, *en tout bien, tout honneur*, has enjoyed the sight of a perfect ankle, and so on, should not be

allowed to record the fact. For did not our grandmothers trip along the Pantiles in short dresses? Does not the contemporary Continental peasant carry out their praiseworthy example? And do our sisters refrain from patronising the burlesque theatres? Ill-moulded, indeed, must be their limbs who object to the record of the respectful admiration with which I was fired by that fortuitous but all too-fleeting Revelation of the Beautiful.

"Go on," growls John Ascot, already deep in the sonorous Iambics; "what are you stumbling at?"

And so I go on. But it is no use trying to keep my eyes on the crabbed Greek characters now, for they keep wandering away after a dainty little grey-clad figure that is diminishing steadily towards the rocks, and with it diminishes my diligence, and at last I jump up and stretch myself.

"Look here, John," I say, "I'm not in reading form this morning; let's go for a walk along the shore."

"All right," answers the unsuspecting classic; "but remember you owe me four hours now, and I'll have them out of you by—Euripides!" Whereupon, picking up our books, we march off at a smart pace, and, though unbeknown to John, Upon the Track!

I am, indeed, giving chase to the little grey figure, for I am determined to see whether the pretty feet that flashed past me can support anything less than loveliness. We gain upon her (once more unbeknown to John), but presently she disappears among the rocks. It is not long before we also reach the rocks, and then we see This. An arena of silvery sand, running up to the shingle and down to the sea, surrounded by a semicircle of great boulders frowning, and, where the sun catches the bright quartz, sparkling through the heavy green seaweed that drapes them. The waves purring up to the shore in wondrous lacework, or, where they meet resistance, breaking into fountains of white foam. And on the delicate shell-dotted floor, pacing up and down, a maiden fair that any feet in the world should be proud to carry—I should not mind doing it myself for that matter.

Fair, do I say? Yes, most divinely fair. But her close-braided hair is dark, as are her arched brows and deep up-curling lashes; and her eyes are violet-grey, and her cheeks a tender olive that the sun, the breeze, and her bright youth have wakened into a life of colour.

She is strangely occupied. For she is pacing up and down with a thin brown-paper-covered manuscript, to which she refers every now and then, in one hand, while the other is apparently employed in giving point to a swift flow of words she is addressing to some invisible "Miss Hardy." What can she be about? Surely, surely, I cannot have fallen in love at first sight with a pretty lunatic!

Presently she puts the book into her pocket, and advancing a few steps towards the sea, as she might to an audience, drops it a quaint little curtsey, and breaks into song. Prosaic John Ascot would have fain pursued his walk, but I check him with a gesture, and we listen:—

"Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, ripe I cry;
Full and fair ones, come and buy!
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer there

Where the sunbeams sweetly smile,
There's the land of Cherry Isle."

All this in a sweet untutored voice like a nightingale's. And her innocent coquetry and pretty gestures of invitation are so enticing that I can only wish she *had* some cherries to sell so I might purchase her whole stock, one by one.

"There plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.
Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, ripe I —"

She has caught sight of us. As she breaks off in confusion, she completes her conquest of my impressionable heart with a rosy blush that, if possible, makes her lovelier than before.

"Pray forgive this involuntary intrusion," I stammer, raising my hat in my best manner; "we will walk on as fast as we can." She bows in acknowledgment of my white lie; but the bird is scared, and I cast many a lingering look back at her graceful form as she hurries towards the town.

"Pretty girl," remarks John. And straightway forgets her.

Our walk does not last long, for suddenly I discover that I have letters of vast importance to write, and so we turn homewards.

This, however, is but a subterfuge on my part. Truth to tell, it has just occurred to me that as Toole, the inimitable Toole, has included Shoalford in his provincial tour, as he opens with *Paul Pry* this evening, and as "Cherry Ripe" is usually interpolated in that moving play, I may very possibly renew my acquaintance with a certain young lady no later than to-night. So instead of writing letters, important or otherwise, I hasten to the Theatre Royal and secure the stage-box. And, after hanging about the neighbourhood a little in the faint hope of catching yet another glimpse of my sea-nymph, I go home to John Ascot, and lunch.

The sultry afternoon drags along somehow to its close. I try hard in its course to liquidate a part of my four hours' indebtedness; but over the pages of my Euripides there dances a name I noted on the playbills, and "Nora Carillon" interferes sadly with Jason and Medea.

At last dinner is over, and leaving friend John to his article on the Universities' Reform Bill, I go out for a walk. That is, I walk up to the theatre. I am soon ensconced in my box, with a purchase I made on my way through the town; and sit through the first scene of *Paul Pry* with such patience as I can muster. Toole is admirable to-night, but I want to see Phœbe, the pretty *soubrette*, "with a song." At last the scene changes, and in Colonel Hardy's garden stands Phœbe, otherwise Nora Carillon, otherwise my sea-nymph of this morning.

To say that I applaud her every point more vociferously than the most enthusiastic "god" at the Vic. could his favourite low comedian, were but feebly to describe the physical expression of my approval of her exertions. But when she trips down for her song, and becoming aware of my presence, falls to blushing even more charmingly than ever, I am strangely moved.

As she comes to the last note I extract my purchase from its silver paper. It is a bouquet; and lustily vociferating *encore*, I throw it at her feet.

The house takes up the cry, and she sings again. But she does not look my way this time, and soon is gone.

A tap at my door. Enter Mr. Mortimer, the worthy lessee of our theatre. I am a great pet of his, probably because I have a large income of my own, and a good deal of it finds its way into his treasury.

"How do you do, Mr. Wavertree?"—very blandly—"I just popped in to say you should have had the usual box, only it was booked yesterday. Sorry I couldn't do it for you."

"But there is one thing you *can* do for me," I say with a sudden inspiration; "and that is, take me behind and ask Toole if he will allow me to tell him personally how delighted I am with Paul Pry."

In a few minutes the genial actor receives my awkward felicitations with such unaffected and hearty kindness that I forget the real object of my visit behind the scenes until the call-boy summons him for the next act, and I leave his dressing-room an enthusiastic Toolist. Then, however, I delay Mortimer at the wings with an artful series of questions anent stage machinery, and am presently rewarded for my astuteness by the appearance of Madam Phoebe at her entrance, D. F.

"I should like to congratulate —," I whisper confusedly. "Charming voice—Cherry Ripe—Do, there's a good fellow!"

I have been introduced. She has bowed gracefully, thanked me for the flowers winningly, excused my eaves-dropping laughingly, and is once more on the stage.

I get home, I suppose, by instinct; for to-night I am walking on air, and it is all I can do to abstain from proclaiming my felicity to the passers-by. A couple of words from a pretty mouth,—felicity? Well, you see, I am only just twenty-one, and she is my first love.

The next day is the cricket-match. I have half a mind to play truant, and spend my time instead in looking out for Nora; but patriotism, or rather Shoalfordism, prevails. The ground is very picturesque. The close-cropped turf, surrounded by great elms; the deep circle of eager spectators, a few well-appointed drags, and a host of nondescript conveyances; the white tents and cricketers, and the rainbow of ladies' dresses; a goodly sight to see on a hot summer's day. But, to me, all vanity and vexation of spirit.

At last it is my turn to go in. And, at last, in the excitement of defending my wicket, I forget my new-born tremor of hopes and fears, and pile up runs faster than my opponents can deliver balls. I am the hero of the hour; and when I carry out my bat I am welcomed with a storm of cheers, as having deserved well of Shoalford.

Now the innings is over, the crowd streams all over the ground, and makes a point of examining the pitch which is being carefully rolled. Why, I know not; but the crowd invariably *does* examine the pitch.

"Well-played, Mr. Wavertree!"

It is Nora. She is all in white to-day, and that suits her down to the ground. With her is an elderly little lady in black silk.

"Mamma," she continues, "let me introduce Mr. Wavertree." Then, turning to me, "My mother, Mrs. Deveson."

"Ah!" says the little lady, with a pleasant smile and proud look at her daughter; "the gentleman who admires my Nollie's singing so much."

Nollie! I fall in love with the name at once.

I murmur some common place, yet am inwardly much comforted at the thought that my Nollie has some one to look after her. Please to observe the "my."

"This is an unexpected pleasure," I say, trying to control my too-palpable delight; "I had no idea that my batting was being watched by the critical Mistress Phœbe."

"No more than yesterday morning I could have imagined —."

"Ah, Miss Deveson," I interpose, "if you knew how awfully jolly you look when you are rehearsing you would not grudge me yesterday morning."

And so we fall into pleasant converse until the bell rings, and I have to field-out with our side.

Dear old John, who is simple as a child as to anything unconnected with the classics, attributes my wondrous good-humour to the score I have made to-day, and is good enough to accompany me to the theatre on my solemn promise to get through a lot of work to-morrow. He is immensely delighted with Toole, roars with laughter all through the piece, and is blind enough not to recognise my Nollie (there's that "my" again) in her humble travestie.

To-morrow comes. I work all the morning as if I were reading for honours in order to have the afternoon to myself; but after lunch I make for Wellington-street, where I have ascertained the Devesons are lodging, and hover about as if I were contemplating an ante-prandial burglary.

Very soon two ladies emerge from No. 20, and we are shaking hands and congratulating ourselves on this unaccountable stroke of good fortune.

"I am *so* glad to meet you, Mr. Wavertree;" and, indeed, I think she is. "We were just starting off to 'do' Shoalford; and now we may hope, perhaps, to enlist you as our cicerone."

Perhaps! Well, I show them all our lions, and as Shoalford is a quondam Roman station and Norman stronghold, I have plenty to show. Then I accompany them to their door, and there, oh joy! am asked in to tea.

The company opened on Monday; this, therefore, is Wednesday, and so far I can give a distinct record of the progress of events; but how Thursday and Friday speed, from the hopes and anticipations of their dawn to the regrets and sweet memories of night, I cannot well chronicle.

During the happy hours they vouchsafe me I learn much of my darling and of her history. How she persuaded her widowed mother to allow her to add to their modest income by going upon the stage; the difficulties she has had to contend with; her determination to succeed; her plans for the future. And, on my side, I have told her all about myself. I think they know as much about me as I do.

But, more than all, I am beginning to hope that some magnetic power in my great and sudden love for her has exerted its influence, and that she may come to care for me.

As I escort her home from the theatre this Friday night she promises to come out for a sail in my boat to-morrow if she can get leave, so I wait outside while she negotiates.

"Mamma says I may go, Mr. Wavertree," she cries presently, running joyously down to the gate, "if it's fine, and you take your old man-o'-war's man with you; so, good night, and *à demain!*"

"Good night, Miss Deveson." She gives me her hand. The moon is shining; I am in love, and her hand is trembling a little, so I kiss it, and depart hastily, marvelling much at my own audacity.

How I get through the night I know not; in fact, I think I must be just a little mad at present, for I find under my cheek when I wake after a troubled sleep a lady's glove, which I may or may not have been kissing a good deal. Such vagaries, however, are neither here nor there. What, at the same time, is more to the purpose is this, that at two of the clock on the Saturday which now is I am helping old Chumler to stow away the last bag of ballast in my stout little boat, and I can see a tight-fitting grey dress making its way towards us down the beach.

A cheery greeting, a scramble up the steps, and she is aboard. There is many a willing hand about when *my* boat is for sea, so we are soon at the water's edge. I stand at the tiller, and watch the surf. A great roller heaves and spends itself at our bow. "Go!" I cry, and we are off.

With a fresh land-breeze and sheets hauled taut we have soon threaded our way through the little fleet of fisher-boats that lie at their moorings, tossing and rolling as if jealous of our liberty, and in a few minutes we are ploughing through the fresh green waves, and ever and anon breaking into little fits of laughter as the strong salt spray baptizes one or other of us.

Laughter is catching; salt water is the best medicine for a sad heart in the world; so between the two it is no wonder that we are a *parlous*, merry party. *Vogue la galère!* But after a time our conversation begins to flag. Chumler is leaning over the bows meditatively smoking his pipe; Nollie is sitting by my side buming snatches of sweet old songs; I am steering, and enjoying her presence. My left hand guides the tiller, my right has somehow or other prisoned hers, and she has not rebuked me. I can think of nothing but that she leaves for Birmingham to-morrow with the rest of the company, and I fancy the same thought is saddening her too.

"I say, though," she breaks out suddenly, "we mustn't go too far. I have to be on the stage at a quarter to eight, you know."

"This breeze will take us back as fast as we came," I answer. "And I wish to God I could keep you from going back at all."

She smiles, and blushes a little at my fervency, but, as if in answer to my ejaculation, the wind veers and drops, and finally falls altogether. In half-an-hour we are hardly sailing a knot an hour; in a word, it is nearly nine o'clock before my boat's keel grates upon the sand.

We are strolling up the beach, not hurrying—it is no use hurrying now,—and she is leaning on my arm.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?"—almost weeping—"I shall never get another engagement! and poor mamma—oh, I am so wretched!"

"Nollie, darling," I whisper, drawing her to my breast, "give up the stage, and be my wife; and your mother—she's a dear old lady—she shall live with us; and I have heaps of coin; and we'll do all the marketing together; and oh, my sweetheart, I love you, please!"

Stupid words enough, but they sound all right in the moonlight.

* * * * *

There is no more to tell. Except that all this happened a year ago, and that there is no wife so sweet as my Nollie in the world. I have spoken!

En Passant.

NO T long ago, it will be remembered, Mr. Fechter went through the ceremony of marriage in America with a Miss Lizzie Price, although his first wife, *née* Eleonora Rabut, was then—as she is now—living. Madame Fechter, we are able to state, is seeking to obtain a revocation of the letters of administration taken out upon his estate by his so-called wife. The account of Mr. Fechter's death reaching Mme. Fechter in Paris, she wrote to a lawyer of Philadelphia, putting the matters in his hands, and asking him to take such steps as would be necessary to insure her recognition there as the true wife of the dead actor, and have his body removed from Mount Vernon Cemetery to France. The consequence was that an application has been filed in the Orphans' Court of Bucks County to revoke the letters of administration. Mme. Fechter will then have only to show the validity of her marriage and the absence of a divorce to realize her wishes, providing that her non-citizenship does not prevent. Any contest in that case, if one were possible, would be more for social than pecuniary reasons, as Mr. Fechter's lawful heirs inherit only a legacy of debts which the sale of all his personal estate and his mortgaged farm would barely discharge.

In connection with this painful subject Madame Fechter has written a letter which for many reasons should find a place in these pages. "After the departure of my husband for the United States," she says, "I lived with my two children in the most profound retirement until cruel necessity forced me to seek a position for my daughter. This daughter had been educated as a lady, for she had always counted on the love and talent of her father to secure her position, so that in time she would marry and lead a domestic life. Up to 1873 we hoped for the return of an honourable man and a loving father, of a husband who had, during nineteen years, made his wife both proud and happy. The first misunderstandings in our until then happy home, so well worthy of respect in any sense, came through the person with whom he left London, and afterward from the person who tore from his children the respect and the love and adoration they had for their father, and that I was happy to encourage in them. Mr. Fechter appreciated this, for he thanked me for it in terms that proved that at times the life he was leading and dare not break away from made him very unhappy He needed a calm and honourable life She then dared to bury in her family grave the body that belonged to us alone, and above all to send, four days after this horrible event, this telegram addressed to his daughter—

"Your father died Monday, I will write you the details and those of his property, and his intentions.

"LIZZIE PRICE FECHTER."

I need not tell you our grief and our just indignation. Your heart will comprehend both. Since then we have had no news at all. We are absolutely without resources of any kind—my daughter being still too young to earn enough for our support, and my son not having yet begun his career."

THE hundredth night of *Notre Dame de Paris* was celebrated by a long-to-be-remembered supper at the Grand Hotel, Paris. M. Victor Hugo presided, and among the guests were M. Vitu, M. Sarcey, M. Albert Wolff, M. Caraguel, M. Edouard Fournier, M. Clarétie, M. Coppée, M. Catulle Mendès, M. Silvestre, M. Leconte de Lisle, and the Paris correspondent of *The Theatre*. The company

playing the piece were well represented. Supper over, Madame Marie Laurent read a little poem by M. de Banville in honour of M. Hugo, who was *salué* as

Génie entré vivant dans l'immortalité,

and some lines written by M. Coppée, to grace M. Bonnat's portrait of the author of *Hernani* were recited by Mdlle. Lody.

Mr. IRVING, unknown to himself, has undergone a phrenological examination during one of his performances, and the results thereof are given to the world in the *Protestant Standard*. His powers of perception, we are told, are large. Details that other people would pass by he will notice, take into account, take advantage of. He has objection to what is coarse, rude, or mere buffoonery, though real and sterling wit he can thoroughly appreciate. Everything done in his theatre bears the impress of intelligence of a superior nature. Knowledge of character is another power which he possesses in a remarkable degree, and here again comes his power of detail. His slightest glance, his half-uttered sense, his pause, has often more effect than the most eloquent declamation of another. He could be no servile imitator of others, and has a mind made to climb, to improve, to be satisfied with nothing that is not as near perfection as can be. Another key to his success is that he is a thorough master of his own mind. He can marshal, direct, drill, guide, control every action and thought, so that each will fall into its proper place.

MADAME RISTORI last month gave a performance in Paris on her way to the North. Her reputation, by the way, was made in the French capital. She first appeared there in 1855, the year of the first Exhibition, in *Francesca di Rimini*. She had been preceded by a very modest reputation, but the day after her first appearance she found herself famous. In her third and fourth visits to Paris she played in French at the Odéon, in a piece written expressly for her by Legouvé, *Béatrix, ou la Madone de l'art*. It was then that they sang in the Quartier Latin

Madame Ristori
A vraiment le tort i-
mmense d'avoir un gout vé-
hément pour Legouvé

The attempt was not very successful, and since then she has played always in her native tongue.

THE papers to be read at the sessions of the New Shakspere Society's meetings at University College this season are:—November 14—I. "On Hebenon in *Hamlet*, I. v. 62," by Dr. Nicholson; II. "Essex is not the Turtle-dove of Shakspere's *Phoenix and Turtle*," by Mr. Furnivall; III. "Shylock defended; Portia questioned," by a Lady. December 12—I. "On the Evidence that Shakspere was, in *Troilus and Cressida*, re-writing an Old Play," by Mr. J. W. Mills; II. "Are the Philosophings of Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida*, III. iii. 75–111, and of Aufidius in *Coriolanus*, IV. vi. 37–55, mistakes in Characterisation on Shakspere's Part?" by Mr. Furnival. January 23—III. "On the Inconsistency of the Time of Shakspere's Plays," by Mr. Edward Rose; II. "Is there a Fifth Day in *Romeo and Juliet*?" by Mr. W. J. Rolfe; III. "There is not a Month between Scenes ii. and iii. of *Julius Cæsar*, Act I.," by Herman Linde. February 13—"On Shelley's Use of Shakspere," by Mr. W. J. Craig. March 12—A paper by Mr. T. Alfred Spalding. April 9 (probably)—"Hamlet not a Pessimist," by Mr. T. Holmes. May 14—"On Shakspere's Treatment of Fate and Free-will in his Characters," by Mr. F. D. Matthew. June 11—"On the Seasons of Shakspere's Plays," by the Rev. H. N. Ellacombe.

MR. HENRY J. BYRON is about to give us some emendations of Shakspere's text. Many passages, he says, are almost unintelligible. Take, for instance, the

lines in *Macbeth*, "Hang out our banners on the outward wall ; the cry is, still they come." Now it would be simply puerile to presume that the wicked Thane should order the banners to be suspended from the outward wall, where the insolent foe, who were still coming, could so easily capture them. The reading is evidently a distorted one. Now supposing—a quite natural inference—that the women of those days "banged" their hair, what more sensible proposition from one of Macbeth's temperament than to "Hang all the bangers on the outward wall ; the cry is still they comb ?" Accept this solution, and the passage becomes radiant with light. Both Mr. Furnivall and Mr. Halliwell-Phillips are of opinion that this proposed emendation should be carefully considered.

THE news of the death of Mr. Jerrold Dixon, or, as he chose to be called, Gerald Dixon, will occasion widespread regret. The son of Mr. Hepworth Dixon, he was educated at Westminster, and in 1870 was called to the Bar. His sympathies, however, were with literature rather than law, and in him *The Theatre* has lost one of its best and most valued contributors. A story which he wrote for us under his signature last autumn, "Bashful Fifteen," is being adapted to the stage. In 1875 he prepared for Mr. Odell an excellent version of Molière's *Médecin Malgré Lui*, already made known to English playgoers—in part—by Fielding's *Mock Doctor*. In the winter of 1866-7, when the dreadful ice-accident occurred in Regent's Park, Mr. Dixon, at the imminent risk of his own life, plunged into the water and rescued somebody from drowning, and the chill he suffered in consequence was the cause of the slight lameness he afterwards showed. His loss will be keenly felt at the Savage Club, of which he was for some time honorary secretary.

MR. TOOLE informs us that the theatre he has taken was once a Roman Catholic chapel. It was the home of the Oratorians, or "Fathers of the London Oratory of St. Philip Neri," from the time of their first establishment in England under the auspices of Dr. Newman in 1848. Here it was that Dr. Newman a little later delivered his celebrated "Lectures on Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans." On the removal of the Oratorians under Father Faber, in 1856, to their present abode at Brompton, the little "Oratory" fell into the hands of Mr. Woodin, and was converted into the Polygraphic Hall. Its contemplated absorption about two years hence into the adjacent hospital will probably represent the last of the metamorphoses of Father Faber's Oratory.

MR. EDMUND FALCONER, who died in September, was a writer and Irish actor of more than average merit. Before appearing on the stage he published a volume of graceful poems. His first play of importance, *The Caggot, or Heart for Heart*, was produced at the Lyceum Theatre in 1856, with Mr. Dillon at the head of the cast, and from that time down to a comparatively recent period he was often before the public as a dramatist and as an actor. His most successful play was *Peep-o'Day*, which, brought out at the Lyceum—of which he had become the manager—at the end of 1861, had a long run. His first essays as an actor were made in high comedy, but it was in parts like *Danny Mann*, which he created, that his strength really lay. For two or three years he was associated with Mr. Chatterton in the management of Drury Lane.

KARL ECKERT, for the last eleven years conductor at the Berlin Opera-house, and director of the Court concerts, died on the 14th ultimo, aged 59. His father, the London *Figaro* says, was an officer in the Polish army under Prince Poniatowski, and entered the service of Prussia after the battle of Leipsic. The soldier was killed two years after his son's birth, and the child was adopted by the regiment. In early life he was regarded as a musical prodigy ; Frau von Foerster, the wife of a man distinguished in literature, adopted and placed him under Grenlach and Rechenberg, and the Countess Rossi (Henrietta Sontag) took him under

her protection. At the age of seventeen he wrote his first opera, *Catherine of Nurenburg*, and in the following year, *The Charlatan*. When Mendelssohn returned to Berlin, Karl became his pupil, and under his auspices wrote his oratorio *Judith*. The King of Prussia sent him at the expense of the State to study in Italy, and on his return in 1846 he wrote his most successful opera, *William of Orange*. In consequence of political troubles he went to Paris, where in 1851 he became conductor of the Italian opera. Having gone on a tour in America with Sontag, he proceeded to Vienna, and in 1862 became *kapellmeister* at Stuttgart.

THE age of chivalry is indeed gone. About a month ago a charming young lady was singing in a comic opera at an American Theatre. In the stage-box, evidently enraptured with the performance, was a youth of noble aspect. The performance over, he threw a singularly beautiful bouquet on the stage. The actress-singer, with a pleased smile, stooped to pick up the fragrant offering. Then, as though by magic, but in point of fact by means of a piece of string, it shot back to the box it came from. The audience, sad to relate, were hugely diverted, not only by the incident itself, but by the helpless amazement depicted on the lady's face as she slowly rose from her stooping posture. It was clear she could not bring herself to believe that so cruel a trick had been perpetrated. The noble youth, who sat calm and unconcerned, did not again go to the theatre.

THAT agreeable writer in the *Birmingham Mail*, "Robin Goodfellow," tells a story which more than one of our readers may well lay to heart. It has been said by some sound small philosopher somewhere that three or four free admissions to the theatre spoil a man for life—as a *paying* theatre-goer. This is in itself a "free admission," with much sense in it. The man won't pay; he has lost all belief in it, and becomes a confirmed "order-hunter" for life. One of these worthies was well put down by a well-known and popular actor one night:—"You know," said the hunter, "that I have always been a friend to actors!" "Why so?" was the reply, "you don't *pay* to go in, do you?" "Oh, no; I never pay!" "Then how, pray, can you be the actor's friend?"

MANY of our readers must have been unable to understand the meaning of a sentence in Mr. Byron's article in our last issue on the subject of "Going on the Stage." This sentence should be read as follows:—"There is hardly a stock company in the country; as to anything like the regular seasons at the best theatres, where the profession, as a profession, could be studied, they do not occur." The vagueness was due to defective punctuation.

IN reference to *Jonathan*, the new piece at the Gymnase, a curious anecdote is related. MM. Oswald and Giffard, the authors, offered the piece to the manager of the Nouveautés, M. Brasseur, who expressed himself very pleased with it, but sent it to M. Gondinet for a few *remaniements* which it seemed to need. The latter was so pleased with it that, after making a few improvements, he took it to the Gymnase, where it was at once accepted. Not long afterwards he chanced to meet M. Brasseur. "Ah!" he said, "I found *Jonathan* better suited to the Gymnase than to your theatre, and have handed it to M. Montigny." M. Brasseur was not unnaturally angry, but was appeased by an assurance that the next piece confided to M. Gondinet by M. Montigny should be diverted to the Nouveautés.

MR. BENNETT, whose death was announced in our last issue, and whose performance of Apemantus was one of the most striking features of Mr. Phelps's revival at Sadler's Wells of *Timon of Athens*, was a man of some literary attainments. He wrote a volume of poems, an historical play called *Retribution*, and a work—illustrated with sketches by himself—of Welsh scenery. He was old enough to remember John Kemble, whose style of elocution he followed to the last.

M. SARCEY has just given an amusing lecture in Paris on the visit of the Comédie Française to London. The statement made by the manager of the theatre as to the receipts of the performances, he said, were false. Tickets were sold through the music-sellers at fabulous prices, and the returns were double and treble what the managers stated. The company used to complain, that while they received only 6,000fr. a night, they brought in 45,000 to 50,000fr. "That," Mr. Perrin replied, "is what saves us from criticism. The Comédie cannot undertake a commercial speculation. This excursion to London has not been undertaken for the purpose of making money." M. Dumas had written a letter in which, after expressing his satisfaction at the fact that his pieces had at length been sanctioned by the Lord Chamberlain, he had likened the judgment of the English on his work to the judgment of posterity. If Dumas were judged by posterity, as he was judged by the English, "la posterité ne va pas s'amuser." Dramatic criticism did not exist in England; the "comptes rendus sommaires" published in *The Times* and other journals were generally furnished by the theatres themselves, and the articles that appeared during the visit of the Comédie Française were written by men engaged specially for that occasion. That visit had shown the English what a company of actors should be; it had shown them the advantages of the teachings of a Conservatoire, and had once more affirmed the superiority of French dramatic art. It is unnecessary to say anything in refutation of M. Sarcey's remarks about English dramatic criticism, but it is right to state that his allegation as to the receipts is flatly contradicted in a letter to the *Parisian* from M. Mayer. If "music-sellers" sell tickets at more than the usual rates the managers derive no benefit from it.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT has addressed a letter to the *New York Herald*, stating that Mr. Jarrett was not empowered to contract engagements for her in America. This letter having elicited some unfavourable comments, a journalist attached to the *Parisian* called upon the actress at her house in the Avenue de Villiers. "Having," he says, "passed through the garden, and receiving a joyous greeting from the deerhound, the greyhound, and the three poodles, we were shown into the studio, hung with rich draperies and strewn with beautiful bibelots and objects of art, and there we found Mdlle. Bernhardt, in a white cachemire dress trimmed with white satin and brandebourg, sketching the head of a girl. Mdlle. Bernhardt explained that all the arrangements that she had ever made with Mr. Jarrett amounted only to a preliminary treaty—a *projet de traité*—and that no definite treaty had ever been signed. In fact, at the time of her troubles with the Comédie Française, she had informed Mr. Jarrett that the whole affair must fall through, and even the *projet de traité* considered null and void."

I must not be supposed, however, that Mdlle. Bernhardt has abandoned the idea of going to America. As a matter of fact, she hopes to be able to pay a visit to that country next year, or in 1881. Mindful, it seems, of Rachel's experience there, she will not go until she has felt the pulse of the public, and until the whole tour has been thoroughly arranged beforehand. She intends to go with some picked *camarades*, as she disapproves entirely of the "star" system, "I would not," she says, "play the classical repertory; nobody would understand it. Even we French get bored by it, for not one in twenty of us can understand it. I would play Ophelia and Romeo, but in my own language. I would sooner play in good French than in English with a French accent. The advantage of playing Shakspere is obvious. Everybody is well-acquainted with the plays, and could follow them, even if he did not understand French. There is, however, one thing which would prevent me from going to America, namely, if I felt that the newspapers would treat me too severely. Some London papers have treated me very badly. I once complained to the Prince of Wales of the matter, and he replied: 'Ma chère amie, you are not so badly spoken of as my mother is.' I am, therefore, not in such bad company."

At the Play.



IN LONDON.

IN reviving the Younger Colman's *Iron Chest* Mr. Irving had more than one disadvantage to overcome. The play itself, to begin with, is so poor a specimen of dramatic art that it engenders a feeling of irritation in the mind of the least critical spectator. As was pointed out in these pages two months ago, it is an adaptation of Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, a novel intended to illustrate the abuses of which aristocratic power is susceptible. The "aristocrat" here, it should be said, is not a monster of iniquity, an individual of the wicked Earl type. He is deliberately exhibited in such a light that we may contemplate him with exalted pity and even sympathy. Originally of a noble and tender nature, Falkland is led in a moment of uncontrollable and well-accounted for frenzy to commit a murder, but completely escapes detection. Caleb Williams, one of his servants, eventually becomes possessed of the secret, and the unhappy master, who, although afflicted with the keenest remorse, would now shrink from no crime if by perpetrating it he could keep a spotless name in the eyes of the world, persecutes him to the verge of infamy and death in order to deprive his testimony of any weight. The dramatist fairly succeeds in reproducing this character on the stage, but in all other respects *The Iron Chest* must be pronounced an extremely defective work. It is slovenly in construction, has little or no female interest, and abounds in tawdry speeches, cheap sentiment, and appeals *ad captandum*. Mr. Irving has taken various liberties with the play to good purpose; but as theatre-goers of the present time demand form as well as substance in dramatic work, and are very ready to ridicule anything in the shape of bombast, *The Iron Chest* could hardly have been made acceptable by any means short of recasting and rewriting it altogether. Indeed, we think Mr. Irving would have had reason to congratulate himself if, instead of relying upon Colman's piece, he had employed a practised dramatist to re-adapt the novel. Another disadvantage attending the revival lies in the traditions which surround the character of Sir Edward Mortimer, as Falkland is called in the play. Four or five actors have impersonated it with considerable success; anyone possessed of even a superficial acquaintance with the history of the stage is aware of the effect it created in the hands of Edmund Kean. Mr. Irving so far surmounts the two obstacles we have indicated as to make us oblivious for a time of both the defects of the play and what previous representatives of Mortimer are said to have accomplished. Those who had seen him in the somewhat analogous characters of Mathias and Eugene Aram might have predicted as much, but few can have been fully prepared for such a picture of mental torture as he now sets before us. From the moment when, dressed as a gentleman of the last decade of the eighteenth century, with

bloodless face and prematurely gray hair, he is discovered conversing in his library with Adam Winterton, the dull glare of the fire falling upon figures in armour and antique furniture,—from this moment, down to that in which he dies under the pressure of a troubled conscience, the actor seems to exert a sort of fascination over the audience. If the impersonation is to be appreciated at its right value it must be studied as a whole, but some of its parts deserve particular notice. Among these we may mention the pathos infused into the speech as to the captured poacher, the restrained anguish with which he tells the story of his crime, the depth of meaning underlying his seemingly commonplace injunctions to Wilford, his cruel and inflexible resolution in preferring the false charge, his fierce agony at the strangely brought-about discovery of his secret, and, above all, the revulsion of feeling with which he fell upon the secretary's shoulder with a plea for forgiveness. In this, as in all his performances of characters invented before his time, Mr. Irving departs far from precedent; and many spectators will doubtless be shocked to hear that he delivers the soliloquy beginning, "Honour, thou blood-stained god, at whose red altar," as a mournful self-communion instead of rolling it out in the good old "effective" style. Not the least remarkable feature of the assumption is the self-conquest it exhibits. The unfortunate mannerisms which sometimes detract from the effect of Mr. Irving's acting, and beyond which too many of his critics perversely refuse to look, are here conspicuous only by their absence. Every word is distinctly enunciated, every action marked by a self-contained repose. In a word, Mr. Irving's Mortimer will take a high rank among his achievements, whether as to breadth, force, picturesqueness, or moderation. Many of the other characters in the piece are represented with rare excellence. Mr. Barnes, striking into a new path, appears as Fitzharding, and realizes in a large measure the cheery *bonhomie* of that redoubtable soldier. Mr. Norman Forbes is scarcely experienced enough to undertake Wilford, but plays with grace and pathos. Miss Florence Terry, in whom much of the persuasive charm possessed by her sisters may be discerned, is the unfortunate lady Helen; while Mr. Mead throws some rugged force into the character of Rawbold. The period of the play is now assigned to the close of the eighteenth instead of as hitherto the beginning of the seventeenth century—an innovation which, as every reader of *Caleb Williams* will see, is in harmony with the spirit of the story.

THE last season of the Prince of Wales's under the management which in a few short years has raised it from the lowest to the highest rank amongst the theatres of London is occupied with a play very far removed in tone and character from the typical dramas by which Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft made their little house famous. Under the circumstances this was inevitable unless one of Robertson's comedies had been once more revived, for the mantle of that delightful playwright has descended upon his successors only to hamper them in their efforts and to conceal whatever original dramatic power they may possess. Better a good adaptation of a new French drama than a poor imitation of an old English one, and the manager who won such marked success by the aid of *Nos Intimes* and of *Dora* may well be considered justified in his choice of *Les Bourgeois de Pontarcy*.

Mr. Albery has, upon the whole, accomplished his task of translation—we employ the word in no invidious sense—with vigour and ability. It is true that his work displays dramatic tact rather than refined taste, and that thus some of its most striking portions appear curiously out of place upon the Prince of Wales's stage. To say this, however, is to find fault as much with the theatre as with the author, for if the dramatist in some of his strongest passages misses the tone of the house for which he is writing, the miniature stage is to blame for having exclusively cultivated a style with which dramatic breadth appears so completely out of keeping. Under no circumstances, if we leave the acting altogether out of the question, could a plot like that of *Duty* be unfolded to less advantage than here, where the occupants of stall and box are not prepared to digest strong meat, and where a highly-strained emotional performance is not expected, least of all on the part of the *jeune premier*. The merest glance at the conditions under which this young man does what he believes to be his "duty," and at the peculiar form of self-sacrifice which he feels himself called upon to undertake, will discover the nature of the interest. Sir Geoffrey Deene, a young squire engaged to his cousin Mabel, learns to his horror that the father whom, with his mother, he mourns with such loving respect has left behind him a mistress and an illegitimate child. A series of incidents, contrived with ingenuity, but without much regard to the probability of the behaviour of the chief *dramatis personæ*, forces Sir Geoffrey either to wound his mother by telling her the sad truth, or to cause her almost equal pain by proclaiming both mistress and child to be his own. Notwithstanding the grief caused to Mabel by his overstrained loyalty to his dead father, and notwithstanding the ruin of his own good name, the young man determines that deception is for the moment his "duty," and though in the end the object of the sacrifice is accidentally defeated, the pain suffered is none the less, and casts an almost tragic gloom over the later acts of the play. In the illustration of this mental torture, which is to our thinking treated by the dramatist with undue and almost undignified prolixity, Mr. Conway fully rises to the trying occasion, and, admirably seconded by Miss Dietz at a critical moment in a most dangerous scene, he reaches a level of passionate pathos such as he has not before attempted. The performance is, however, full of fine acting, some of it invaluable to the play; as, for example, Mr. Arthur Cecil's consummately natural "friend of the family," and the measured sadness of Mrs. Vezin's much-wronged widow; and some of it incongruous, in spite of its intrinsic merit, like the *ci-devant* pride of Mrs. John Wood. This latter is delightfully droll, but in much of the borrowed detail almost farcical from an English point of view. Miss Marion Terry's artificiality in an ingenuous rôle is pretty in its way, but scarcely satisfactory; and Mr. Kemble exaggerates an over-coloured character in a manner which contrasts with the forcible truthfulness and easy grip of character displayed by Mr. Forbes Robertson in a not particularly promising part. Miss Augusta Wilton is also included with pleasing results in the cast, the absence from which of her sister and Mr. Bancroft is to be regretted in spite of the excellent reason for it provided in their labour of supervision here and at the reconstructed Haymarket.

By Messrs. Hare and Kendal, who have opened the St. James's with

success as signal as the failure hitherto of the efforts of Mr. Hare's successor at the Court, it was not unnaturally thought that the unprecedented attractions of their new theatre in itself precluded the need for inaugurating their season with an absolutely new bill. No London playgoer is likely to miss a visit of curiosity, if nothing more, to a playhouse by the side of which all others seem dingy, old-fashioned, and uncomfortable, and without going into details which must be already familiar by description, it must be added that the most sanguine expectation will be more than gratified. The programme consists of Mr. G. W. Godfrey's comedy, founded on *Le Fils de Famille*, called *The Queen's Shilling*, and already noticed in these pages on the occasion of its production at the Court matinées last year. Its cast remains unaltered, save for the substitution of Mr. Terriss for Mr. W. Herbert in a minor part, which does not seem to encourage its new representative to make the most of such opportunity as he finds. Mr. Hare, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, each with a character well-chosen and admirably worked up, continue their thoroughly-artistic work ; and the comedy, in spite of its awkward construction in its later episodes, delights its audiences by its telling dialogue and its effective scenes. *The Queen's Shilling* is preceded by a new one-act play from the pen of Mr. Val Prinsep, whose pretty little comedietta, *Cousin Dick*, is fresh in our memories. *Monsieur le Duc* is a well-written trifle spoiled by its unpleasant subject, the offensive nature of which cannot be concealed even by such delicate art as that bestowed upon its treatment. It deals with the natural pain and horror suffered by a noble *roué* who discovers in the object of his gallant attentions his own daughter. There is, of course, no reason why it should not occasionally chance that a man who deliberately prepares to ruin a young girl whom he has never seen should be punished by a hideous complication such as this. But there is, it seems to us, every reason why such a suggested abomination should be kept off the stage and beyond the reach of picturesque illustration, either in play or novel. In *Monsieur le Duc* the young lady declares herself, or rather produces a letter, from which she learns the secret of her paternity before she has been shocked by finding out the fate which her elderly host intends to be hers ; whilst he on his part does as much as the graceful repentance of the moment can do to blot out a crime which in imagination and in purpose he has already committed. Nor would we imply that the play is without its touchings of true, pure feeling, or is ever allowed to become repulsive in detail. Mr. Hare, magnificently dressed as the *Duc de Richelieu*, and acting with dignity, if not with courtly grace, does all that is possible to soften down the harshness of the situation. But when every allowance has been made for the refined treatment of the story, both by actor and author, it still remains one which leaves a nasty taste in the mouth, and suggests a terrible poison, such as might perhaps be well employed for the heroic purposes of tragedy, but cannot be profitably or even safely used as a flavouring for comedietta.

IN *Courtship*, at the Court Theatre, Mr. H. J. Byron is seen simultaneously at his best and at his worst, and it is to be feared that the worse aspect will strike playgoers the more forcibly of the two. For a couple of acts, the plot of *Courtship*, though conventional and stagely treated, is

intelligible and fairly effective ; the young heiress, in doubt as to the sincerity and value of her lover's protestations, is a sufficiently possible personage, and the scheme which she adopts for discovering what she wants to know gives scope for telling situations. But when Miss Vivian's pretended poverty and lowly birth have shown up Captain de Courcy and Mr. Phineas Gubbins respectively in their true and unfavourable colours, and have removed the only obstacles in the way of an earnest declaration from a proud though lowly suitor, when moreover, the lovers, who have hitherto persistently misunderstood one another, fall into each other's arms, the interest of the story, such as it is, comes to its natural end. But for some inscrutable reason Mr. Byron attempts to resuscitate it in a third act, which is one long anti-climax. He makes the successful suitor quarrel with his lady-love for having tricked him into happiness, and then, in order to make it possible for this too-consistent gentleman to marry a wealthy wife, he startles us by producing a long-lost uncle, whose unexpected reappearance reduces the wealthy Miss Vivian to the comparative poverty on which her fiancé insists. As this astonishing resurrection satisfies Miss Vivian's lover, it would seem that what he objected to was not the trick played upon him by his mistress, but the actual fact of her having more than the £200 a-year to which alone she now has a right. We confess, however, that we are less easily satisfied, and look in a three-act play for some motive more adequate than any discoverable in Mr. Edward Trentham's singular conduct. So much for Mr. Byron at his worst ; at his best he gives us some of the most exhilarating fun through the medium of dialogue and conversation that has been enjoyed since the many days of *Our Boys*. The self-made Gubbins, impossible creature though he seems in Miss Vivian's drawing-room, is irresistibly comic as rendered by Mr. Anson ; and much of the talk between the snobbish swell, De Courcy, the Evelyn-like Trentham, and the other friends gathered together at Greenthorpe Manor, entertains as much on the stage by its brilliant humour as in real life it would appal by its rudeness. *Courtship* is, however, constructed and written in so reckless a fashion that its artistic end must be considered attained when it convulses its hearers with merriment ; and this it succeeds in doing from first to last. Besides Mr. Anson, Mr. Coghlan, in the inexplicable character of Trentham, distinguishes himself. Miss Amy Roselle does all that is needed for the heroine, and Mr. H. Reeves Smith, in a small, boyish part, makes a *début* of decided promise. Mr. Wilson Barrett, too, as De Courcy, plays with his usual trustworthy art, which also enables him to make the most of the chief character in Mr. H. Jones's very pleasing *lever de rideau*, *A Clerical Error*, an artistic trifle dealing with the mistake of an elderly lover, and its generous rectification by a self-sacrifice unsuspected by those whom it benefits.

IT seems to have been found difficult to hit the public taste with the standard revivals at the Imperial, and yet, as we pointed out last month, *The Beaux' Stratagem* was well worth seeing, and since then *The Poor Gentleman* of Colman the Younger has been given with a far stronger all-round cast than it was at the Strand, where it was so successful a few years back. Its career, however, was very short, and it soon gave way to the

well-worn *Rivals*, though the Sir R. Bramble of Mr. Farren and the Humphrey Dobbin of Mr. Everill should alone have attracted crowds to see it. The Ollapod of Mr. Brough was not so strong as might have been expected, but it was at least unobtrusive, and helped to show that the play, when given in its full five acts, is full of good comedy, apart altogether from the fire-eating apothecary and his absurdities. It is to be hoped that Miss Litton will continue her series of well-played revivals, which must in time meet the appreciation which they deserve. Of Mr. Dion Boucicault's new sensation-play, *Rescued*, we were unable to give a full résumé before its production at the Adelphi. The impression that it leaves on the mind after seeing it, is that of an *olla podrida* of familiar stage-devices and conventional characters, saved in this country from the fate which overtook it elsewhere by a single scene in which a toy-train plays the chief part. The subordinate parts are quite unworthy of such artists as Mr. Hermann Vezin and Miss Moodie, Mr. H. Neville and Miss Lydia Foote. At the Gaiety there have been frequent changes of programme, amongst which only the revival of Mr. Byron's domestic drama, *An English Gentleman*, calls for note. In this Mr. Byron assumed with excellent effect the rôle formerly played by Mr. Sothern at the Haymarket. The rest of the representation was at best mediocre.

MRS. BATEMAN'S record at Sadler's Wells Theatre, the reputation of which she has worked so well to re-establish, is so far one of good intentions imperfectly realized. Whether much good of the artistic kind, which Mrs. Bateman is sure to strive after, is nowadays likely to be by any possible means done at Clerkenwell, it is not our province to discuss, but we have to express our conviction that this object cannot be attained here or elsewhere by a revival of so unworthy a work as Pocock's *Rob Roy*. Mrs. Bateman knows how to move on with the times, and she must feel that the day for this musical maltreatment of a standard novel has gone by. The piece is old-fashioned, and its old fashion is by no means a good one, even though it may have been approved in its time. Moreover, though really mounted with the utmost taste and liberality, *Rob Roy* is not happily cast, and with the exception of Miss Bateman's (Mrs. Crowe's) fine Helen Macgregor and Mr. R. Lyons' Dougal, there is nothing in the performance of noteworthy merit, whilst there is much to call for blame. Mrs. Bateman deserves to succeed, but not by the aid of Pocock's *Rob Roy*.

IN THE PROVINCES.

At the end of September Miss Ellen Terry and Mr. Charles Kelly were at Liverpool. The former on the occasion of her benefit appeared in the screen scene from *The School for Scandal*, and the trial scene from *The Merchant of Venice*. The *Post*, speaking of her acting in the former, says she was remarkably effective at the close, "her tenderly tremulous and broken accents touchingly conveying the womanly contrition which so pathetically points the moral of a dramatic incident in which human infirmity, passion, perfidy, generosity of sentiment, and youthful gaiety and frivolity are so wonderfully and skilfully

blended." Her Dora, another of the characters she essayed here, is, in the words of the same excellent authority, "something more than a mere stage picture—a living, breathing reality, a perfect embodiment of Tennyson's conception." Mr. Sims Reeves was then playing at the Amphitheatre with Mr. Pyatt's company—a fact which made an influential critic regret that the great tenor should at the beginning of the close of so glorious a career waste his physical strength and artistic instincts upon music so utterly unworthy of his consummate powers. Mr. Reeves next proceeded to Edinburgh, where, according to the *Scotsman*, he played Macheath, "if not with all the swagger and bravado that might be proper to the dashing highwayman, still with keen perception of the humours of the character, and with a degree of animation that was very enjoyable." In October Mr. Toole visited Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool. "Whatever," the *Glasgow Herald* remarks, "may be said of his line of business as a literary product, it is only fair to say that it is always decent and clean. He rules in the kingdom of farce and low comedy, loud and uproarious if you will, but still as a sort of prince, whose conquests are over the evil spirits of meanness and melancholy. Besides being a prince he is also a doctor, and his physic is good for maladies which puzzle other practitioners. Perhaps these are the reasons why he drew such a handsome audience to the Prince of Wales's Theatre last night." Miss Geneviéve Ward commenced her tour on the 29th September at Nottingham, appearing at Liverpool on October 6th. The *Post*, speaking of her in *Forget-Me-Not*, says:—"Miss Ward is splendidly equipped by nature for the part of the Marquise, a woman cast in the ripest and yet most graceful mould of bounteous beauty, and endowed not only with all the facial charms and artillery of womanhood, but with all the flexible habitudes of dauntless resolution and facile wit, now stinging and now cajoling, by which the queenship of successful adventure can be maintained. Not less remarkable than Miss Ward's power in the part is its calm and placid dignity, which she never lays aside. Every quip and every innuendo of the bad woman's tongue, every gesture of her mobile frame is governed in the actress as much by perfect taste as strong mastery, and the constant and gracious finish of the elaborate impersonation of this Parisian Lucrezia is as remarkable as its firm and vivid power." Miss Fowler also at West Hartlepool, has succeeded in greatly arousing the enthusiasm of the audience. The *Northern Evening Mail* says, "As Helen Summerson in *Scandal*, she shows a marvellously-wrought picture of a virtuous wife when unjustly suspected of treachery to her husband. Not a point is lost—every word, every gesture, carries, as it were, a whole battery of electricity." Mr. Dillon played for some time in the West of England. The *Bath Herald* speaks of his Lear as an impersonation of singular interest and power, though unprovided with the marvellous senility of Macready in the part. In Limerick, a new melodrama, *Ony-na-Pocas*, remotely connected with Fenianism and the present anti-rent agitation, was represented amidst loud applause; and an excellent opera called *The Lancashire Witches*, by Mr. F. Stanislaus, was brought out at Manchester with great success. Mr. Vernon, with Miss Swanborough, continues to rely on *Mammon*. Several versions of *L'Assommoir* are now being played in the country.

IN PARIS.

THE most remarkable piece brought out during the last month is MM. Meilhac and Halévy's one-act comedy, at the Vaudeville, of *Lolotte*, but its merit consists less in the piquancy of its incidents and dialogue than in the cleverness with which the authors have invented a character suitable to the talents of Madame Chaumont, who represents the heroine. The curtain rises on a boudoir of a certain Baronne Pouf, who begins the play by inducing her husband to go out for an hour or two. Her object in doing so is a little suspicious, especially as a M. Croisilles comes in soon afterwards and eyes her with unmistakeable adoration. This suspicion, however, proves altogether unfounded. The Baronne is a faithful spouse, and, having agreed to take part in some amateur theatricals, is merely anxious to be alone while Mademoiselle Lolotte, the actress, is giving her some instruction. Croisilles, who is too well acquainted with the latter, is about to beat a precipitate retreat, but before he can do so the actress enters, and with a whispered reassurance he goes to the smoking-room. The refined manners of the actress amaze the Baronne, who has seen her in *La Petite Naturaliste*, and heard her say "Oh ! mince," in an apparently unaffected accent. The rehearsal over, Lolotte lights upon proof of her lover's faithlessness, and, hardly able to conceal her anger, goes out. The ardent lover, bent upon conquering the Baronne, immediately reappears, and is about to pour forth his passion when Lolotte comes in again. Then ensues a terrible scene, in which the actress abuses the Baronne in the language of a *poissarde*. Just as her fury is at its height the Baron enters, and she is about to reveal all when the look of despair in the Baronne's face arouses her compassion. "Yes, madame," she says, with a smile, "that, I think, is the way in which the scene should be acted!"—a speech which the Baron accepts as a satisfactory explanation of the situation. Madame Chaumont plays the actress with delightful briskness and point, the contrast between refinement and coarseness being remarkably vivid. An imitation she gives of the way in which men walk would alone repay a visit. *Lolotte* is followed by *Le Lion Empaillé*, in which M. Dupuis makes an excellent Mauduit. Soon afterwards, an operetta called *Le Petit Abbé*, by MM. Borage and Livrat, was presented at the same theatre. The hero, the Abbé Stanislas de Boufflers, of famous memory, is put before us as a youth of pure mind and nought but worthy inclinations, but as diverted from the path of virtue by a clever and pretty young lady. The interest of the piece turns simply on this transition from the chrysalis to the butterfly state. The Abbé has an excellent representative in Madame Chaumont, who seems likely to become a sort of Déjazet. The Opéra Comique, lavishly decorated, has re-opened with the *Pré aux Clercs*. The Porte Saint Martin is relying upon a revival of *Cinderella*, gorgeously put upon the stage. Madame Théo hardly looks the part of the heroine now, but any disappointment in this direction must be forgotten amidst the merriment provoked by M. Ravel's Hurlubulu. At the Théâtre des Arts we have a little piece called *Miss Bébé*, a pet name attached to the heroine, Mdlle. Rénée. This young lady sees the shadows of two persons on the blinds of a room occupied by a Baronne on a visit to M. Rénée's house. Mdlle. mentions the circumstance to M. Le

Baron, and as he has not been in his wife's room that night a terrible to-do is the result. Suspicion falls upon a young man to whom Rénée is to be married, but the culprit turns out to be his father. Two other novelties, *Les Petit Coucous*, at the Palais Royal, and *Le Moulin de Roupeyrac*, at the Troisième Théâtre Français, are failures.

IN BERLIN.

THE season was a month old before the Royal Playhouse produced any novelty, but the merits of the first new piece of the season amply atoned for the delay in its production. *Rolf Berndt* is the name of the new play, which is in five acts, and is from the pen of Herr Gustav von Putlitz, the author of *Spielt nicht mit dem Feuer*, *Gut giebt Muth*, *Doctor Raymond*, &c. The new work is far in advance of any of the former efforts of Herr von Putlitz, and, as regards construction, it would do no discredit to either M. Sardou or M. Augier, whose works the German author seems to have studied profoundly. *Rolf Berndt* is a man who left home in poverty, and, returning after having amassed a fortune in Australia, falls in love with and becomes engaged to a young widow of high social position, whose friends throw ridicule upon her union with a man of such humble origin and unrefined manners as the Australian settler. Unpleasant rumours are circulated concerning Rolf's past life. He finds that his father's creditors, whom he had promised to pay, remain unpaid, though he had sent home money for the purpose to his mother, who, it turns out, had misapplied it in payment of the debts of her second son, a scapegrace, but his mother's darling. Count Eberhard, an old friend of the young widow, warns her against Rolf, whom he denounces as a forger and a thief whom he had once compassionately supplied with means to fly from Europe. In spite of this, the widow's confidence in Rolf remains unshaken, and efforts to arouse in him suspicions of her infidelity prove equally futile. The Count at length finds out that he has mistaken Rolf for his scapegrace brother, and thereupon he gives up all his jealous dislike of Rolf, and becomes the champion of the man he had innocently wronged. For a moment Rolf's suspicions are aroused by a secret visit of the Count to the young widow; but in a passionate scene between Rolf and the Count the reason of the visit is satisfactorily explained, and all ends happily. The plot is, throughout, interesting, and becomes more so as it approaches its *dénouement*, the characters are lifelike, and lively and pathetic scenes follow one another in admirable variety. The result was a complete success, for a part of which credit is due to the acting. Herr Berndal was excellent in the title-part; Fräulein Meyer played the widow in a quiet, graceful manner, and showed no lack of warmth in the more passionate scenes; and Fräulein Abich was very charming in a lively *ingénue* part; but Herr Liedtke was not well-suited to the rôle of the Count, except in one or two humorous scenes. The first performance took place on the 20th of September, since which date *Rolf Berndt* has been played three times a week. A revival of the *Gefügniss* of Benedix, which has been absent from this stage for some years, is the only other noteworthy event in the past month's history of the Royal Playhouse. The old comedy was very cordially received. It was right well played

all round ; Herr Rahn, from Zurich, as the Baron, Herr Liedtke as Dr. Hagen, Herr Krause as the Servant, and Mesdames Kessler and Abich in the leading female rôles, being particularly deserving of mention. The Residenz Theater, having lived for some weeks on German versions of M. Paul Ferrier's *Femme de Chambre*, M. Augier's *Les Fourchambault*, and M. Dumas's *Monsieur Alphonse*, produced early in October a translation of an Italian prize-comedy by Signor Achille Torelli, entitled *Die Ehemänner*, which met with little favour, and after seven performances gave way to a new comedy by Herr Kneisel, entitled *Sein einziges Gedicht*, a childish production, which Herr Ferdinand Dessoir, who is now starring here, failed to render acceptable with all his natural humour. *Sodom und Gomorrha* kept its place in the bills of the Wallner Theater till the 17th October, when it was played for the 49th and last time for the present. At the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt Theater, Herr Franz von Suppe's *Boccaccio*, one of the greatest successes of the last season in Vienna, was produced towards the end of September with brilliant success. The cast was very strong, the *mise-en-scène* beautiful, and the Austrian composer's latest work promises to have a long run here.

IN VIENNA.

THE Burg Theater produced two new pieces during the past month, a tragedy in five, and a comedy in four acts. The former is entitled *Amy Robsart*, and is an ill-constructed dramatic version by Herr Rudolph von Gottschall of Scott's "Kenilworth." A leading critic says that "as a contribution to the involuntarily comic this tragedy is valuable." Let us pass to the comedy, which is from the pen of Herr Adolph L'Arronge, whose brilliant successes at a minor theatre—the Carl, where his *Mein Leopold* and *Doctor Klaus* had long runs—made him ambitious to try his fortune on the stage of the principal theatre of Vienna. We rejoice that his venture has proved successful, for *Wohlthätige Frauen* (Charitable Women), as his new piece is called, has, like all his other works, the great merit of being a pure, wholesome production. The object of the comedy is to ridicule women who take a prominent part in charitable societies, not from any wish to do good, but merely with a view to their own social advancement. Frau Möpsel, the vain and pretty wife of a leather-dealer, aspires to gain admission into high society and to have her husband decorated. To attain her object she joins a charitable society to which aristocratic ladies belong, and getting into the habits of fashionable life all her time is taken up with bazaars and parties, so that she neglects her husband and child. At length she begins to suspect that a governess is supplanting her in her husband's and child's affection, and jealousy works her cure. Side by side with this plot, and but slightly connected with it, runs the story of a certain major, with a rough manner, but a tender heart, who loves and is beloved by the governess of his niece's orphan child ; it is long before the worthy couple discover their affection for each other, the major thinking himself too old and unattractive to win a girl's heart, while the governess does not venture to raise her eyes to him. The acting of the new comedy was throughout of great excellence. Herr Hartmann played Möpsel with rare skill, and Frau Möpsel's characteristics

were very happily caught by Frau Mitterwurzer. The important part of the Major was played by Herr Sonnenthal in a masterly manner, Frau Gabillon was excellent in the character of a lady-patroness of the charitable society, and Herr Schöne and Frau Hartmann were very droll in two servant parts, in which they contributed greatly to the success of the comedy. On the 11th October, the eve of his 85th birthday, Herr La Roche, who is perhaps the oldest actor on any stage, made his *rentrée* as Miremont in the *Gönnerschaften*, and the veteran met with a singularly warm reception—both on the part of his colleagues and on that of the public. At the Stadt Theater, M. Davyl's comedy *La Maitresse Légitime* has been produced under the title, *Wie Frauen lieben*, with little of the success which the original attained a few years ago at the Paris Odéon. On the other hand, a new farcical comedy by Herr Julius Rosen, entitled *Starke Mittel*, gained a *succès de fou rire*, being played in spirited style by Herren Bukovics and Tyrolt, and Mesdames Schönfeld, Albrecht, Wagner, and Schandler, to name the more prominent of the artistes engaged in the performances. A careful revival of *Othello* drew but a small audience; the leading parts were played in a manner that left much to be desired, but the Cassio of Herr Bassermann and the Emilia of Fräulein Albrecht were well-nigh perfect. At the Carl Theater, Herr Franz von Schönthan's *Sodom und Gomorrha*, the successful production of which in Berlin was recorded in our last number, was produced early in October with decided success. Herren Teweile, Knaack and Blasel were all in the cast. The same house has given a revival of Offenbach's *Vie Parisienne* under the title of *Pariser Leben*. At the Ring Theater, the Meiningen company opened an engagement on the 15th October, in Shakspere's *Winter's Tale*. At the Theater an der Wien, *Die Kinder des Capitäns Grant*, a dramatic version of M. Jules Verne's well-known story, is still running; and the Theater in der Josephstadt has produced another version of the same story under the title of *Die Abenteuer des Seecapitäns*.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IT was at the Arena Nazionale in Florence that the first important novelty of the autumn season in Italy was produced. *Per vendetta*, a three-act comedy, by Signor Paolo Ferrari, has but four *dramatis personæ*: a wealthy young countess, who, having been left a widow after a few months of married life, wants a second husband; an equally wealthy young lady, named Adele, who is equally inclined to matrimony; the Marquis Friulani, a young man of a sceptical and bantering character; and Malardi, a realistic poet, who is an assiduous admirer of the Countess. Having fallen asleep over a volume of her admirer's poems, the Countess overhears on awakening a conversation between the two men, in which the Marquis seeks to dissuade the poet from paying his addresses to her, on the ground that she is a vain coquette. She determines to avenge herself, and before long succeeds in making the Marquis fall deeply in love with her. Adele, whose ambition it was to marry the Marquis, and Malardi, who is irritated at the turn things have taken, conspire together to thwart the designs of the Countess, but in the course of their conferences they become enamoured of each other, and, after many ingeniously-contrived turns in the plot, the comedy ends in two marriages.

The dialogue being written with much brightness and vivacity, and being delivered with due point by Signore Pia Marchi and Giagnoni and Signori Bellotti-Bon and Biaggi, the comedy was very successful. It was subsequently produced with equal success at Turin, where the part of the Countess was admirably played by Signora Marini, who is soon to leave Italy for a very lucrative engagement in Spain. In Rome, Cesare Rossi's excellent dramatic company produced several new pieces during the past month at the Valle Theatre. First in the list comes *Mastr' Antonio*, a melodrama in four acts by Signor Marenco, which was favourably received, but does not deserve notice, so trite and timeworn are the incidents of its plot. The same prolific writer, who has the reputation of lending his name to less-known playwrights, is responsible for a new three-act comedy entitled *Capricci del caso*, in which there is really no novelty in plot, characters, or even dialogue. A wordy one-act drama by Signora Ratazzi, inappropriately entitled *Il Divorzio*, was only saved by the fine acting of Signora Campi, in the character of a wife who commits suicide to enable her husband to marry a girl he has seduced. *I Moasca*, a medieval legend by Signor Anselmi, with a very puerile plot, narrowly escaped being hissed off the stage, a fate from which it was rescued by Signor Maggi's spirited delivery of a long tirade of some merit. The able efforts of the company failed, however, to procure a favourable hearing for the *Patria potestà* of Signor Salmini from an audience who have had such a surfeit of ancient Roman plays that they are disposed to re-echo the famous French cry, *Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains?* Last in the long list of novelties comes a new comedy by the veteran Signor Giacometti, entitled *Una lettera anonima*, of which we need only say that it is a commonplace production, not calculated to enhance its author's reputation. Cesare Rossi's company were more successful in their performances of plays of established reputation, such as *La Signora dalle Camelie* (*La Dame aux Camélias*) in which Signora Campi acted with so much delicacy and passion that a leading critic does not hesitate to compare her with Aimée Desclée. As for the theatrical season at Milan, so little space remains at our disposal that we can only state that the Pietriboni company have been giving with success at the Manzoni Theatre a series of plays by Dumas *père* and *fils*, Sardou, Augier, Giacosa, and Ferrari, while the Moro-Lin company have been playing their well-known *répertoire* in the Venetian dialect at the Fossati Theatre. Prior to the arrival of the Pietriboni company several new pieces were produced at the Manzoni Theatre to display the precocious talents of the juvenile prodigy, known as Gemma Cuniberti.

IN NEW YORK.

ON October 14th the first cool weather of the season blessed the American metropolis. Up to that date the days had been as sultry as Summer, and the nights incited to promenades rather than theatricals. As a consequence, the season, which was expected to be very brilliant, had resulted in only moderate business. There was a general agreement among managers that they had opened too early. The preliminary season at Wallack's was

followed—after a week's intermission, during which the house was handsomely but gaudily re-decorated in green and gold—by the regular opening, on October 4th, with a new comedy, called *Contempt of Court*, constructed from two French farces by Dion Boucicault. It turned out to be an adaptation of *Le Reveillon*, which Mr. Gilbert has already brought out as *On Bail*, with one act of *Americans in Paris* interpolated. The piece provoked laughter on account of the capital acting of Mr. Harry Beckett, Miss Ada Dyas, and the stock company; but is condemned as more prurient than *The Pink Dominos*. Mr. Augustin Daly's new theatre, elegantly fitted-up in what is called the London style, viz., dark colours and heavy draperies, opened with the failure of *Newport* (a silly version, by Miss Olive Logan, of *Niniche*) and *Love's Young Dream*, a singing comedietta of some merit, in which a very good company, including Miss Katherine Lewis, Miss May Fielding (an amateur), Messrs. Hart Conway, Charles Fisher, John Drew, and William Davidge, were sadly misplaced. *Divorce* was then revived, but is no longer popular here, nor has Miss Helen Blythe, a *débutante* who was expected to eclipse all other leading ladies, any power to make it popular. On October 18th it was shelved, and Mr. Bronson Howard's new comedy, *Wives*, freely adapted from two plays, by Molière, produced. The piece is not very brilliantly cast, but is equipped with entirely new scenery and ancient French costumes. At the Standard the Bandmann season has resulted unfortunately. *Narcisse* attracted no crowded houses, *Hamlet* was ignored, and the revival of *The Merchant of Venice* proved the best card of the management. The speculation closed prematurely on the 18th, and Mr. and Mrs. Bandmann went to Boston. Mr. Ion Perdicaris and his step-daughter Nard D'Almayne will probably produce their new comedy, *The Picture*, at the Fifth Avenue, in November, the Standard being given up to a *Pinafore* revival. On the 11th Mr. Boucicault, after firing a preliminary volley of abuse at the Press, withdrew *Rescued*, and played Louis XI. at Booth's Theatre to introduce his son, Dion, junr., as the Dauphin. The *débutant* was very successful. Mr. John Clayton, as Nemours, and Miss Rose Coghlan, as Marie, were conventional, but pleasing. The sensation of the play was the Irish trio, Mr. Boucicault as the King, Mr. Brougham as Coitier, and Mr. Dominick Murray as Marcel. They all used the brogue, and the audience smiled and laughed when they should have applauded. Italian Opera, by the Strattisch troupe, will probably be called upon to relieve Mr. Boucicault from his managerial dilemma. The Academy of Music, with the Mapleson Opera Company, opened on the 20th, all the artistes having arrived before our report left New York. Mr. Sothern, at the Park Theatre, ended his "Dundreary" fortnight on the 18th, and revived *David Garrick* on the 20th. His engagement will end early in November, and the regular company, in Gilbert's pieces, succeed him, *The Palace of Truth* being their first production. At the ill-fated Fifth Avenue, Mr. Grau's troupe, reinforced by Paola-Marié, Angèle, and Capoul, have not succeeded in effacing the memory of Aimée, the most American of prime-donne, in French opera-bouffe and M. Grau finds that *La Fille de Madame Angot*, *Perichole*, *Giroflé-Girofle*, and *Barbe-Bleue*, are only good for a very few performances. *Le Petit Faust* is now added to the *répertoire*.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

TOWARDS the end of October Madame Patti left her temporary residence in the Neath Valley, to sing at the Trocadéro, in Paris, on the 23rd ult., in aid of the Association des Artistes Dramatiques. The Marquis de Caux, it will be remembered, threatened to interdict, as he has the power to do, her engagement at the Paris Italian Opera next February. The announcement of her appearance at the Trocadéro placed him in a difficulty. If he obtained an injunction against the proposed performance he would be told that he was interfering with a work of charity ; if he did not, his inaction would serve as a precedent against him. In this dilemma he took the latter course, and Madame Patti was allowed to sing.

MADAME NILSSON, after passing some weeks at the country residence of the Marquise d'Aoust, recently arrived in England to fulfil her concert engagements, and will shortly leave for Madrid.

AN agreeable surprise is in store for those who have despaired of ever seeing Mr. Irving as Digby Grant again. Next month he will play the part in a performance organized for Mr. William Belford, who has been incapacitated by a severe illness from following his vocation.

SIGNOR VERDI has consented to the production of *Aïda* at the Paris Opéra.

THE *Tribut de Zamora* will be produced the year after next. Recently, at a *déjeuner*, M. Gounod agreed to forfeit 50,000 francs if he did not deliver the score by the 1st May next. M. Vaucorbeil, on his side, engages to pay the same sum to the authors of the book, MM. D'Ennery and Brésil, if the opera is not brought out by the 1st October, 1881.

M. GOUNOD was lately invited to dine with the King of the Belgians. M. Ambroise Thomas is working at Saint-Gildes on an opéra-comique in three acts.

IT is expected in Florence that Madame Albani will sing this month at the Teatro Pagliano there.

M. VICTOR HUGO, after visiting M. Paul Meurice at Veules, and M. Auguste Vacquerie at Villequier, has returned to his home in the Avenue d'Eylau, where he is at present engaged upon a new volume of poems, called *Toute la Lyre*.

A NEW comedy by M. Sardou will shortly be put in rehearsal at the Comédie Française, also *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Henri III. et Sa Cour*. The character of Jourdain usually falls to the lot of the *doyen* of the house, but on this occasion it will probably be played by M. Thiron.

MDLLE. PAULINE LUCCA was lately so seriously stung on the arm by an insect that fears were felt as to her life, but she is now recovering. She is about to appear at Vienna in Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*.

M. FAURE will sing in a series of concerts this winter at Vienna.

MISS NEILSON arrived in New York on the 11th October. During her American tour she will revive the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT, it is believed, will play in Madrid next month on the occasion of the marriage of the King of Spain. She will appear at the Gaiety on the 1st May next. Her engagement is for a month. By-the-way, two duels have just been fought by rival pretenders to her hand, but without serious results.

MR. SWINBURNE'S *Study of Shakspere in Three Periods* is on the point of appearing.

THE Palais Royal company, after playing at Nîee, will appear at the London Gaiety Theatre between the 15th of June and the 15th July, Sundays excepted. The prices of admission, as during the visit of the Comédie Française, will be raised.

THE hope that Mr. Booth would appear at the London Lyceum Theatre next spring will not, after all, be realized.

LORD DESART left Liverpool on the 9th October for a shooting excursion in the Western States.

IN the *foyer* of the Gymnase, a few nights ago, there was an amiable dispute between M. Saint Germain and M. Landroe as to which had created the more characters. The former, it was found, could boast of 103, and the other of 79. The labour represented by these numbers must have been immense.

MR. FALCONER made more than £30,000 by *Peep-o'Day* alone, but died poor. He leaves a widow, and on the news of his death reaching the Savage Club a member opened a subscription on her behalf with a substantial cheque.

THE death of Mr. Lionel Lawson will not lead to any change in the management of the Gaiety Theatre.

THE hundredth night of *Drink* was celebrated at the Princess's Theatre by an agreeable supper-party. Mr. Gooch presided, Mr. Charles Dickens occupying the vice-chair. Mr. Sala, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hatton, and Mr. D. J. Anderson were among the guests. Mr. Warner, in reply to the toast of the evening, made a very graceful little speech.

MANY agreeable memories are revived by the announcement of the death of Mrs. Seymour, which occurred at the end of September. In 1835, as Miss Allison, she appeared at the St. James's Theatre, as Clara, in *A Clear Case*, and soon established a reputation as a vivacious and pleasing actress. In 1854 she became the manageress of that house. If we mistake not, her last appearance was at the Olympic, in *Foul Play*.

WE hear that a smart saying usually attributed to Jerrold was really uttered at his expense by Mr. Charles Kean. "You see," the latter remarked, in reference to some of the attacks made upon him in *Puneh* by the author of *The Rent-Day*, "he is always lying in a critical state."

"Si vous avez l'occasion de parler des Petits Coucous, en répétition au Palais-Royal, faites-moi," M. Adolphe Belot writes, "l'amitié de nommer Eugène Nus avant moi. Ce premier rang lui appartient, car il est d'usage, vous le savez, parmi nous, d'insérer les auteurs d'une pièce par rang d'ancienneté au théâtre, et Nus m'a précédé dans la carrière dramatique."

THE gentleman engaged to edit the play-books sold at the Imperial Theatre can hardly be accused of partiality. The *Poor Gentleman*, he assures us in the preface to the last edition of that comedy, is an "inferior work."

MR. GILBERT holds that it is the sweetest thing in life to see the childlike simplicity and deference to maternal authority which a maiden of thirty-five or forty will exhibit before a roomful of people, as she skips across the floor to ask dear mamma whether she may walk in the grounds for a little while.

IT is suggested that most of the Ralphs in *H. M. S. Pinafore* should be called Singbad the Sailor.

MR. HOLLINGSHEAD has gone to Paris for the purpose of thoroughly observing the internal economy of the theatres of that city. The result of his visit will be made known in one of the daily journals. M. Got's letter as to the dressing-rooms of London theatres has not a little annoyed the manager of the Gaiety, and we may expect that any vulnerable point in the arrangements of Paris theatres will serve to exercise his well-known powers in the way of sarcastic comment.

WHEN, at the end of June, M. Sarcey delivered his lecture at the Gaiety Theatre on the Comédie Française, almost every seat in the house was *unoccupied*. His reputation as a twaddler had preceded him, and his letters in the *Temps* on his London experiences had inspired a widespread distrust in his capacity. His disappointment, we observe, is laughed at in the new Palais Royal piece, *La Revue trop tôt*. During the rehearsals the company piteously entreated the authors to cut out the allusions, which might irritate the critic against them. It was, however, to no purpose,—and M. Sarcey is wroth.

MR. G—— onc day saw a lady running after an omnibus, shaking her umbrella frantically and gasping “Here, here!” “How much has the education of women been neglected!” he murmured; “all the trouble and vexation of spirit she is suffering might have been avoided if she had been taught to whistle on her fingers.”

SURELY Mr. Charles Kenny wrote what follows?

There was a young fellow of Leicester
Who a beautiful damsel did peicester,
But whene'er he addreicester
She call him a jeicester;
So he fled to the wilds of Wecestcheicester.

“CHESTERFIELD,” it was remarked at a club the other night, “once said—and thousands re-echo his words—that no one is excusable for being out of the fashion.” “What then, I should like to know, is a man to do who married a blonde when brunettes were the rage?” asked Mr. Burnand. “Induce her to dye,” quietly responded H. J. B.

THE labour of criticising the performances at the musical festivals is not sufficient to diminish Mr. Davison’s facetiousness. Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt, he says, is indeed a sculptress. She has “chiselled” her sometime agent out of his contract with her, and has “bust” through her engagement to go to America under his auspices.

ONE night last month, just after the Renaissance was opened, Mdlle. Granier sent word that owing to a cold she could not sing, and the money taken at the doors had to be returned. M. Koning telegraphed to Mdlle. Reine, who was then in Brussels, and who, quitting that city on the following morning, arrived in Paris at five p.m., rehearsed at the theatre until half-past six, dined in her dressing-room, and appeared before the audience at nine. The manager has since testified his gratitude by giving her a diamond brooch.

MR. TOOLE is an adept in the art of advertising himself. The other night, in the course of a very short speech to his Glasgow audience, he referred to his present visit as “the most successful” he had ever paid to that town, to “my good and dear friend Henry Irving,” to “the delightful chat I had last week in Edinburgh with the greatest and world-renowned tenor, Mr. Sims Reeves,” and, lastly, to his “approaching campaign at the Folly.”

MR. GEORGE RIGNOLD is about to appear at Drury-lane as Henry V., supported by Mr. Harcourt as the Herald.

MRS. CALVERT now plays Helen in *Rob Roy* at Sadler’s Wells.

INCREDIBLE as it may seem, Mr. Byron has a son eighteen years of age. The young gentleman has a turn for playing in comedy, and has now become an actor by profession under the not inappropriate name of Harryson.

MR. GILBERT and Mr. Arthur Sullivan left Liverpool for New York, per *Bothnia*, on the 25th of last month.

MR. ARTHUR MATTHISON is preparing an opetta for the Olympic Theatre.

MR. GRIGGS has in preparation a fac-simile of the second quarto of *Hamlet*, 1604, and part of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* quartos.

MADAME MODJESKA, the actress, has just translated Mr. Ruskin's *Modern Painters* into Polish.

M. A. DEVIN DUVIVIER has returned to 52, Gloucester-crescent, Regent's Park.

DURING his engagement at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Glasgow, Mr. Toole laid the memorial-stone of the new theatre now being erected in that city. The theatre, to be called the Royal, is expected to be opened in December, under the management of Mr. Knapp.

Mdlle. CROIZETTE is still too ill to reappear on the stage. Her place is taken by Mdlle. Lloyd.

MADAME LEONIDE, LEBLANC will be the next candidate for admission to the Comédie Française. In 1877 she made an attempt to regain this distinction, but in going to the theatre to ascertain the result, was told by M. Perrin that, owing to her misconduct, the *sociétaires* would not hear of her being reinstated. In the event of her forthcoming application being successful, she will play coquettes, Beaumarchais' countesses, and such characters as Marivaux's Sylvia.

THE Odéon has read a drama by M. Paul de Margaliers, *Unis et Libres*, to which some finishing touches are being put by the indefatigable M. Gondinet.

A COMEDY in three acts, *Les Petites Lionnes*, by MM. Crisafulli and Paul Sipière, has been accepted at the Théâtre des Arts. Mdlle. Maria Legault will be "lent" by the Palais Royal to grace the cast.

M. LÉONCE is to appear at the Renaissance in M. Lecocq's new piece, *La Jolie Persane*.

Pâques Fleuries will be followed at the Folies-Dramatiques by *La Fille du Tambour-Major*, an operetta by M. Offenbach.

THE death is announced of M. Georges Petit, the author of *Pepignol Candidat*, *L'Ehéânee*, *L'Affaire Fauconier*, *La Dédicace*, *Le Grand-Père*, and other fairly successful plays. He was only thirty years of age.

M. PALADILHE is setting music to a libretto based by M. Louis Gallet on M. Sardou's *Patrie*.

M. ALBERT WOLFF and M. Raoul Toché have read to the company at the Théâtre des Nouveautés a revue entitled *Paris en Actions*, designed for Madame Céline Montaland.

THE new Théâtre Bellecour, at Lyons, is now open.

THE old theatre at Geneva has been replaced by a new edifice, built at the expense of the late Duke of Brunswick. The former house was opened in 1784 with *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard*, one of the actors being Fabre d'Eglantine. Préville, Dugazon, Molé, Mdlle. Raucourt, Mdlle. Contat, Mdlle. Mars, Talma, Mdlle. Déjazet, Mme. Doche, Arnal, Ligier, Frédéric Lemaître, Rachel, Mme. Ristori and Signor Rossi, successively graced its boards.

THE Russian pianiste, Madame Annette Essipoff, has just been affianced at Vienna to her early master and adviser, the pianist-composer, Leschetitzky.

HERR STRAUSS's new operetta, *Le Prince Orlowsky*, a species of sequel to the *Fledermauss*, will shortly be produced at the Theater an der Wien.

NINA SONTAG, a younger sister of the celebrated opera-singer, died recently in a convent in Saxony, which she entered at the age of forty.

A NEW opera, *Ricardo III.*, by Signor Canepa, is announced at the Carcano, Milan.

A Royal Love, a drama by Donn Piatt, founded on the story of *Jane Shore*, has been accepted by Miss Clara Morris. Mr. Harriott, her husband, intends to lecture this season.

MR. E. WOOLF has written a comedy for Mr. and Mrs. Florence, called *A Million*.

The Theatre.

DECEMBER 1, 1879.

The Watch-Tower.

THE CHURCH AND STAGE GUILD.



HE odd assortment of zealous missionaries which, on the 24th of June, 1879, was elected—we know not by whom—to form the council of what is called “The Church and Stage Guild,” continues its labours so satisfactorily that a month scarcely passes without its providing an unsympathetic public with some subject for a hearty laugh. In these dull times laughter-loving people are thankful for anything in the shape of a good practical joke, and they will doubtless show their gratitude to the

Guild by getting themselves nominated members of it, especially as the sacrifice of personal dignity involves no larger payment of money than that of a shilling annual subscription. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at if the numbers of the Guild increase and multiply; for if it be worth while to pay a penny a week for the entertainment to be derived from a comic paper, how much better a bargain must it be to subscribe a penny a month for the luxury of laughing over the periodical humours of this society. It seems to us, however, that a mistake—grievous no doubt, but still a mistake—has hitherto been made in admitting the reporters, who have, on more than one occasion, caused the comicalities of these meetings to become common property the next day after the entertainment has been given. Surely, if the individual labourer be worthy of his hire, the incorporated toilers in the cause of general merriment are justly entitled to any benefit at even a higher rate than a shilling a head per annum, which they might by business-like measures be able to secure from their audience. Sooner or later they will have to descend from their lofty pedestal of self-sacrifice, and to take money at the doors whenever a mixed monthly meeting of ballet-girls and curates is to be held; and this money can, of course, be profitably expended in the furtherance of the objects of the Guild. Such a meeting, if held at a suitable place, say Exeter Hall, the Westminster Aquarium, or the Agricultural Hall, could not fail to prove attractive; and if only the actresses were pretty

and the young clergymen were eloquent, the funds of the mission would inevitably be largely increased. Even as it is, and without having recourse to any of the *entrepreneur's* devices, which many members of the council are fully capable of arranging and carrying out, the Guild has, during the last six months, made really remarkable progress. The reports of its meetings, which, according to its programme, are to be held on the first Tuesday in every month, are already looked forward to with eagerness—a result due, perhaps, less to the Rev. Stewart Headlam, the originator of the undertaking, than to the damsels more or less known to histrionic fame, who before canons and curates, actors and actresses, and ladies and gentlemen, generally make speeches on racy subjects and originate savoury discussions. Nothing, for instance, would have been better in its way than the boldness of the arrangement by which an important member of the Gaiety company, who has hitherto generally succeeded in keeping her name out of the programme of that theatre, was put up to discuss the conduct of the “noblemen, men of high position, and soldiers, who stand at the stage-doors to tempt girls who are perfectly innocent.” The text thus given out was so promising that we know by intuition how exhilarating must have been the treatment of it by clergymen so able as the Rev. Arthur Mozley, Canon Shuttleworth, and the Rev. Mr. Ridgeway. Happier still, because more delicate and subtle, was the instinct which prompted the fair, but unknown speaker, to lighten the gloom of her subject by such a touch as the suggestion of a fire-hose, to be directed at the heads of these aristocratic Lotharios. The scene thus conjured up is irresistibly comic—Mr. Hollingshead and Mr. Talbot Smith in the foreground extinguishing with streams of well-directed water the baleful fire of illicit love for professional ladies burning in the breasts of the Duke of Balls Pond and Major Spot-White, as they head their phalanx of libertines in Catherine-street, Strand. Miss Rose, for such seems to have been this imaginative lady's name, scored here such a palpable hit that, in spite of her present position on the stage as a mute inglorious Rachel, she ought promptly to be added to the council, if, indeed, her valuable services have not been so secured already.

It is, we fear, probable that Miss Louise Willes, who also took part in the successful entertainment in the rooms of the English Church Union, is to be taken as a more typical member of the Guild than her sister-artist of hose—that is to say, fire-hose—celebrity. Miss Willes's exhortations to professionals to command, by their social conduct, the respect for which they ask, sound flat and tame after the description of the loungers outside the stage-door, but in all likelihood echo the feelings of members of the Guild more numerous than those who sympathize with Miss Rose, her grievances, and her suggestion of a remedy. If we are right in this assumption, it is clear that future meetings of the Guild will fall off in liveliness; for though it may be instructive to hear from the lips of actresses their views as to the proper line of conduct to be adopted by their fair colleagues, it will scarcely be very entertaining. And yet it is perfectly clear from the constitution of this clerico-dramatic society, that abundant latitude is left for the choice of promising subjects for discussion. According to the prospectus of the undertaking, its objects are first, “to promote religious and social sympathy

between the members of the Church and Stage ; " and " to meet for worship at least once in the year." And these " objects," like the memoranda lost by careless travellers, are " of no use to any one but the owners." Sandwiched between these two objects, which being translated imply respectively the introduction of curates to actresses and the promise of stage-players to go to church once a year, there is another clause in the programme which has interest for others besides the sympathetic persons and pretty professionals. It sets forth the intention of the Guild to hold meetings from time to time, " at which papers may be read, and questions discussed, of common interest to the members of the Guild." Here is promise of entertainment far beyond any that is offered by the debating clubs of literary institutions. The questions which are of common interest to the young curate and the young singing chambermaid cannot well be dull, and the discussions that will follow will be practically those of a " young men's and young women's Christian Association," where the young men and young women belong to church and stage respectively. Much will, of course, depend upon the suitability of the questions chosen, and to insure this we would recommend the appointment of a mixed committee of curates and comedians. If the clerical element has all its own way, there will be danger lest the reciprocal element of true sympathy be forgotten ; and while we shall hear much of the influence usefully exerted by clergymen over actors and actresses, we shall miss the valuable lessons to be derived by the pulpit from the stage. When, for example, actresses have been publicly told how to resist the temptations placed in their way at stage-doors, fashionable curates might be instructed how to repulse the advances of maiden ladies who make them slippers. This might, perhaps, be left to Miss Rose ; whilst Miss Louise Willes, to say nothing of council-women like Mrs. Kendal and Miss Genevieve Ward, would we feel sure give their reverend coadjutors many excellent hints with regard to the management of the voice, to appropriate gesture, and to elocution. Mr. Charles Warner, who is, we observe, another member of the council, might join the Rev. A. H. Stanton in impressing upon the milder curates present the value of robust earnestness in making profound impression upon sensation-loving audiences ; and perhaps some of the ballet-girls present could be induced to show the refining influence of grace in movements which, without its aid, might almost be set down as vulgar and undesirable.

It may, of course, be that we are mistaken in supposing the Church and Stage Guild to be aware in what light it is regarded by the outside public. Its leading members may be honestly unconscious that they are practically holding up their own avowed object to ridicule. The young clergymen on the council may not realize that their *penchant* for the conversion of young actresses is open, to say the least of it, to misconception ; and the artists who co-operate with them may not see the charge against their art, which they admit when they find it necessary to make public profession of the faith which is held by the rest of the community. To admit the *raison d'être* of a Church and Stage Guild, when no such ostentatious organization is considered requisite by other arts and professions, is to grant that which the best friends of the stage have always strenuously denied. Actors and actresses

quā stage-players, have just as much or as little sympathy with religion as have other people ; and even to procure the entertainment derivable from the speechifying of curates and ballet-girls, it is a pity either to weaken this sympathy or to hold it up to contempt. The Guild is a fanciful incongruity, and as such is welcome enough, but its feeble eccentricity may indirectly effect an amount of mischief which many of its supporters would, we feel sure, be the first to deplore.

MR. BOUCICAULT AGAIN.

A GLANCE down the long catalogue of Mr. Dion Boucicault's adaptations from English novels and French plays, and down the much shorter but still considerable list of his original dramatic works, is sufficient to convince the most sceptical of his marvellous fecundity. Ever since March 1841, when Mr. Boucicault was only nineteen, and made his first appearance as author of *London Assurance*, he has been able to keep himself prominently before the public as a playwright; and the good luck which is said to have given him the co-operation of John Brougham in his first comedy, and which certainly gave him the invaluable advantage of having his characters created by Charles Mathews, Farren, Madame Vestris, and Nesbitt, has never since deserted him. His energy has allowed him always to keep himself *en évidence*, and he has obtained the ear of a public which listens to him even while it laughs at him. Under these circumstances, and considering that Mr. Boucicault is really almost as clever in his way as he believes himself to be, it is little short of astonishing that he does not, in these later years of his life, make a better use of the opportunities which he has won for himself by the aid of a large collection of other people's novels and plays. We allude now not to his recent dramatic efforts; every playwright must now and again commit a blunder of the *Rescued* order, and perhaps Mr. Boucicault's hand has as much excuse as anybody's for occasionally growing tired and losing its cunning. The noteworthy phase of Mr. Boucicault's recent achievements is not their well-deserved condemnation by the press, but the inadequacy of the author's retort upon his critics. That an attack upon the work of an author such as this should occasion not only a defence in print but a counter-attack is of course only right and proper. Mr. Boucicault is no ordinary writer whose work is placed before press and public for current judgment; and it is preposterous that he and Shakspere should be commented upon in the confident manner which is found satisfactory with a Gilbert, a Wills, a Burnand, or a Byron. The conduct of those who sit in their stalls and not only venture to join in the chorus of popular condemnation, but actually go off to their newspaper offices and place their opinions in print, has only to be realized for its full enormity to be perceived.

It is, however, with regret that we have to pronounce the great dramatist no longer equal to his self-sacrificing task of pouring hot water upon the

heads of the critics who venture to find fault with his work. This regret is rendered all the more keen by our vivid recollection of the skill and power with which Mr. Boucicault wielded the whip even so short a time ago as in 1877, when through the medium of the *North American Review* he simultaneously demonstrated and denounced the incompetence of the press to deal with creations such as those of any author whom he honoured with adaptation. We cannot forget the crushing logic, the cautious and yet effective emphasis, the convincing moderation of passages in this article, such as that which ran, "In the drama the mischievous influence of the press is still more fatal in its effects Unfortunately the newspaper critic is, and always has been, incapable of discharging these functions," the functions of the old inhabitants of the front rows of the pit. "I speak," Mr. Boucicault added, "with the proud confidence of a man who has weighed his words. I speak from a personal acquaintance with the most distinguished of these gentlemen that have misguided London, Paris, and New York during the last thirty years." This, and much more like it, was excellent; and if judicious blame could ever work improvement in an offender, such as a critic who underrated Boucicault, it would certainly be efficacious here. What a falling-off, however, is discoverable in the veteran playwright's latest onslaught upon his foes! Abandoning the broad intelligible ground that it must be wrong to find fault with a play by Boucicault, and the argument that because all critics do so sooner or later they are necessarily "incapable of performing their functions," the public censor condescends to accuse them of a paltry offence like that of bribery, and to imply that he himself is indirectly a sufferer from a widespread system of black-mail. This is a poor old blunderbuss, an exploded weapon dragged from an effete armoury, and it is surely quite unworthy of use by such a man. People have heard so often that critics are bribed, and have had so little proof of the fact, that they begin to doubt the *bona fides* of the accuser, and to wonder whether his indignation against a system of successful blackmail is not akin to the fox's abuse of the grapes which he failed to reach. In the present case, for instance, Mr. Boucicault makes the fatal mistake of naming no names, though he tells us how he tried a writer on a New York journal with a bait of a hundred dollars, and hooked his fish with a cheque "drawn to order." But he omits to make public the name of the unsuspecting endorser of the cheque, just as he subsequently forgets to mention which critic of a leading London journal it was who was "publicly accused" of "the sale of his praise and of extorting hush-money by his censure."

The device is a stale one, and it lays the censor open to a fatal retort when he is challenged to prove his assertions. So long as he confined himself to opinions and to proclaiming that all who disagree with him and disapprove his works are *ex hypothesi* incompetent idiots, he was on safe ground. It is probable that most authors consider their adverse critics more or less foolish, and happily the accuracy of their belief is not susceptible of absolute proof. It is another matter when these wretched journalists are openly accused of being knaves, for knavery, unlike folly, is an offence legally punishable; and it behoves any public-spirited man who finds the knave out

to bring him personally before the bar of public opinion. "Will the public," plaintively asks the disappointed dramatist, "tolerate in matters of art the establishment of a reign of terror and its inevitable consequence, an impost of blackmail?" The public, we reply, cannot help itself if those who alone can lay hands on the culprits will aid the course of justice only by the windy nothings of broadcast insinuation and fretful generalization. As a matter of fact, we are convinced that if even at the expense of an action for libel Mr. Boucicault felt able to prove his assertions, he would on no account miss the chance of posing before the public as the champion of honest criticism; as it is, we must infer that on this occasion he has made a blunder in discharging the great public duty he feels himself impelled to assume.

A CAMBRIDGE DRAMATIC COLLEGE.

THE question of the desirability of founding a National School of Acting, either with or without a National Theatre, has received so much discussion since first it was mooted in the pages of this magazine, that no apology is needed for reference here to any new suggestions on the subject which may from time to time be made. The latest then of these suggestions which is worthy of note, even by those to whom it must seem wildly Utopian, is found in a remarkably interesting work from the pen of Mr. Burnand. Mr. Burnand is a writer who has generally been tempted to confine his writings to a style the reverse of serious, but it did not need the more earnest passages of his eminently-readable "*The A. D. C.*" to prove that he could succeed better than many a more dignified author in productions of an order very far removed from burlesques and parodied novels. Especially with regard to the stage is anything which Mr. Burnand has to say well worth hearing; for ever since those days of the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club, of which we have here such pleasant personal reminiscences, his instinct has led him in the direction of stage-door and footlights.

Mr. Burnand then, in his delightful new book, or rather in its preface, gives the following hint, to be taken for what it is worth by those who are anxious to see the drama treated as an art worthy of study, and not as a game to be played according to the fancy of the several players. Speaking of the famous "*A. D. C.*," he says, "I now see that the society, if recognized and directed by judicious authority, could work for a higher end, and for a far more important object, than was contemplated by its first founders, who will readily admit that their notion in starting the Club was to obtain a fair opportunity for the exercise of their dramatic talents, thus affording themselves novel and intellectual recreation and their friends a considerable amount of amusement. In these days, when the question of the establishment of a School of Dramatic Art is being earnestly discussed, where could it find itself better placed than in the University, which, tardily but certainly, has already shown itself not unfavourable to the legitimate development of energy in this direction?"

The notion is assuredly a startling one, and we can hear in advance the outcry which will be raised against the introduction of a veritable Dramatic School amongst the other schools of the Universities. It is needless to add, that the practicability of the scheme is open to doubt, even by those who are, with Mr. Burnand, anxious to see training for the stage so organized "that the instruction should benefit the aspiring author as well as the intending actor, each of whom would here master the first principles of his art, while the latter, at this early stage of his career, would learn to appreciate, intelligently, dramatic art as a profession, eminence in which demands exceptional acquirements, apart from the possession of exceptional gifts."

When Girton College is further thought of as an institution, which might usefully be affiliated with the new school, other difficulties present themselves, and occasion is given for the attacks of the Philistine and the sneer of the cheap satirist. As matters are at present arranged in our Universities, where a very minimum of technical education either in science or in art is given, it is no doubt a dream, idle though pleasant, to imagine a class of intending stage-players being taught the principles, the development, and the practice of modern acting. Such a liberal-minded scheme, catholic in its countenance of the highest art, whether in the studio, in the music-room, or on the stage, is one of those good things which is emphatically too good to be true ; and it may be granted that society would not as yet be ready to accept it, even if the college authorities could be found to offer it. But it is, at any rate, a cheering sign that any such suggestion can nowadays be made without rousing at once a howl of derision such as it would have met a few years ago.

Whenever the Dramatic College is founded, it is clear enough that it must encounter plenty of opposition ; and the opposition will, as usual, spring from those who are as much startled as alarmed at the idea. Setting apart the small section of the public which, either from a religious or a moral point of view, is honestly afraid of the drama, there is a large number of enemies equally dangerous to the good cause, who are simply scared by any such proposition as that which we have described. They know not why they are frightened any more than does a child who is left alone in the dark ; for reasons which they cannot formulate, the notion of State management or State aid or University recognition of the art of the actor and actress is appalling. To attempt to reason away a nameless prejudice like this is hopeless ; no argument can succeed against irrational sentiment. The only way to win a victory—and the way like art itself is long—is to familiarize the public, or this portion of the public, with the proposals which terrify it so much ; to bring them forward in season and out of season, to ask for more than we ever hope to get, in order that, when our demands diminish, we may obtain the reward of our apparent moderation. Hence, though for our own part we may be unable to see how the Dramatic School for which Mr. Burnand pleads could practically work, and though to our thinking London is the only possible place for such an institution, we have to welcome the suggestion of this new Cambridge college or school.

Portraits.

XXXIII.—MISS ST. JOHN.

IT was at the mature age of eight that this pleasing singer and actress made her first appearance before an audience. Carefully prepared for the task by her father, a musician at Plymouth, she sang at a concert given in aid of the Blind Institution in that town. Her success admitted of no doubt, and four years afterwards she was sent up to London to study for the musical profession. In 1876 she became a member of Mr. Durand's English opera company as mezzo soprano contralto, taking more or less subordinate parts in all the pieces in his repertory. In a few months he made her his prima donna for five operas,—*Maritana*, *The Bohemian Girl*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Rose of Castille*, and *Fra Diavolo*. Miss St. John next joined the company led by Madame Blanche Cole and Madame Rose Hersee, with which she played for three seasons in different parts of the country. This engagement concluded, she appeared as Germaine in *Les Cloches de Corneville*, and the success which attended the performance led to her being engaged to sustain the chief part in *Madame Favart* when that little comic opera was brought out at the Strand. From that time Miss St. John has held a prominent place in her profession. The critics, as a body, seemed to ransack the vocabulary of praise to describe the impression she produced. “The pen of a Byron, a Moore, or a Swinburne,” one of them said, “would drop powerless in the attempt to render justice to the theme. Were the piece as dull as the middle of November, or the performance generally execrable, Miss St. John would save the brand from the burning.” Not being capable of such eloquence as this, we shall prosaically remark that Madame Favart—the true story of whose life may be found in *The Theatre* for last May—was represented by Miss St. John with marked vocal and histrionic skill, with abundance of spirit, and with unimpeachable good taste. Her range is two octaves and a half, from the high C to the low G. Especially pleasing, we may point out, is her singing of the “Artless Thing,” a solo in G and B flat, and the vocal minuet beginning, “To Age’s dull December.” Miss St. John, the *Standard* critic writes, “succeeds admirably in depicting every phase of the character, not only grasping each situation with consummate ease, but, which is a far more important matter, never permitting an excess of confidence to carry her beyond legitimate bounds. We can easily imagine what Madame Favart might become in the hands of an inferior artist, and are therefore the more pleased to notify a performance so well sustained, enforced, and refined. Miss St. John’s abilities as a vocalist are no less conspicuous than as an actress. She possesses a pure soprano voice of most sympathetic quality, full in compass, and well under control; her method is good, and her style betokens culture of no mean order. That she is suited for higher things than opéra bouffe, or the Offenbachian opéra comique, admits of no doubt, and, probably, before long we shall find her occupying a higher position in her profession.”



THE THEATRE, NO. 17, NEW SERIES.

WOODBURYTYPE.

Yours sincerely
Florence St John

The Round Table.

THE CHARACTER OF SHYLOCK.

BY THEODORE MARTIN.

IN the last number of *The Theatre* Mr. Hawkins maintains that *The Merchant of Venice* was intended as a "plea for toleration." I can find no trace of such an intention. Nobody in the play urges anything in the nature of such a plea. Jew and Christian are alike intolerant. Antonio treats Shylock as a dog, as much because he is a Jew as for any other reason. Shylock hates Antonio because he is a Christian. Antonio's friends,—Salanio, Salarino, Lorenzo, and Bassanio, none of them bad fellows, but upon the whole kindly, courteous gentlemen, all think a Jew, by reason of his creed, a creature so much inferior to themselves, that to insult and despoil him of his money and his daughter is an act which reflects no discredit upon them as men and gentlemen. On the other hand, so rooted is Shylock's loathing of them as Christians, that he would rather his daughter had been wedded to any of the stock of Barabbas than to one of them, or indeed to any follower of Christ. Even after the discipline of suffering and of peril which had brought him face to face with death, Antonio seeks to force upon Shylock a renunciation of his faith, not from any belief that this could operate a change in his convictions, or in his cruel nature, but in the very harshest spirit of intolerance. Everybody in the court, the Duke himself indeed, seems to think this the most proper and reasonable demand. Not one gives any symptom that he puts himself in Shylock's position and realizes the fact that to force a Christian to renounce his faith at the order of a court would be a cruelty of the worst kind. Shakspere, moreover, never wrote plays to enforce a moral, although morals are to be gathered from them as they are to be gathered from every scene of human struggle and passion, and from every human creature's life. So, while I cannot think that a plea for religious liberty was in his thoughts in writing this play, I frankly admit that it indirectly inculcates the un-wisdom of religious persecution in the mischief it works upon the persecutors as well as upon the persecuted. Look what it has made Shylock. It has dried up humanity in his heart at its very source. It has made it impossible for him to love those "that profess and call themselves Christians"; for what is the love these disciples of the religion of love have shown to him or to his race? He reverences his own "holy law," and he looks down upon them as benighted heretics from a height of scorn as great as that from which they regard him. Of them all he hates Antonio most, because Antonio is a pattern of his class, "comes so smug upon the mart," with an air of sanctimonious contempt for his Hebrew rivals, and because not content with crossing him in his ventures, "hindering him of half a million," he treats his person with the most offensive marks of

opprobrium and loathing. In Antonio's conduct to Shylock the injury is depicted which religious intolerance works upon what Shakspere most carefully shows us to have been a kindly and generous nature. All men speak well of Antonio. Doing good to others made the charm of the man,—“the kindest friend, the best conditioned, and unwearied spirit in doing courtesies”; but to Shylock, not solely, but mainly because Shylock is a Jew, his heart is closed. Thus is Shylock's harsh nature made infinitely worse, and Antonio's gentle nature perverted by the intolerance of their respective creeds, and we are led to see how a world, difficult enough at the best to live in, has been and may again be made, by religious intolerance, a chaos of the worst passions. Only in Portia is the sweet and humble spirit of Christianity illustrated. She, of course, is well aware when she first addresses Shylock that she has but to put forth the argument with which her own or Bellario's sagacity has furnished her, in order to discomfort him utterly; but she forbears to use it. She tries him with the appeal for mercy; she tempts him with the payment of his debt threefold, “Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee”; and not till she finds him inflexibly bent on exacting the letter of his bond with a vindictiveness which disarms her of any pity she may previously have felt for a man driven to vengeance by years of wrong, does she have recourse to the “strict law of Venice” to turn the tables upon him. Even then she urges him to beg for the mercy which he had forfeited in the same gentle spirit which has animated her throughout. But, save in the words which fell from Portia, there is not in the play, to my mind, a trace of any recognition of the great doctrine of religious toleration. That Shakspere held by that doctrine as stoutly as man ever did I can have no doubt, but I see no symptom of an intention to expound or even to illustrate it. “I cannot find it in the bond.”

BY AN ACTOR.

IF—and there is great virtue in the word—if Mr. Hawkins's theory is the logical result of the view that Shakspere consciously enlisted our sympathies on the side of Shylock, it may, I think, be accepted. For that Shakspere intended us to regard the Jew of Venice with feelings of exalted pity and commiseration I have no doubt. Mr. Hawkins supports his views by an elaborate examination of the character, its surroundings, and the conditions under which it was created. The dramatist was constrained by the anti-Jewish prejudices of his time to exhibit Shylock in a more or less odious light, but while doing so took care to represent him as animated by the whole force of an “old tainted religious aristocracy,” to suggest the antiquity and grandeur of the race to which he belonged, to soften his character by many exquisite touches of human feeling, to attribute his vindictiveness to the “inherited and personal wrongs” he has to endure as a Jew. In one respect, it seems to me, Mr. Hawkins does not make so much of his case as is possible. He points out that the enemies of Shylock are scarcely permitted to gain even our respect, but this is not enough. In *The Merchant of Venice* the Jew appears to less disadvantage than the Christian. Both are animated by the spirit of intolerance, the latter

especially. Antonio, otherwise estimable, shows this spirit in a very repelling form. The Duke and Portia preach to Shylock of mercy, but when the day goes against him they do not practise what they preach—nay, even insist upon his changing his faith. Moreover, Bassanio is a mere fortune-hunter; and Jessica and Lorenzo, if they had their deserts, would be taken up for being concerned together in a downright robbery. “O Father Abraham! what these Christians are!” In writing *The Merchant of Venice*, in short, Shakspere rose without an effort above the prejudices of his time against the Jews, and the tendency of the play is undoubtedly to show that “the worst passions of human nature are nurtured by undeserved persecution and obloquy.” How far this tendency was a matter of deliberate design we shall never know, but Mr. Hawkins’s arguments are hardly overthrown by the fact that the principle of religious toleration is not expressly enforced in the text. Shakspere never preached his moral, in the first place because he was a great dramatist, and secondly because if he had done so in this case the actors would have been “hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted from the stage” by a Jew-hating audience.

By F. J. FURNIVALL.

WAS this “the object with which the *The Merchant* was given to the world, that it was intended as *a plea for toleration towards the Jews*”? Most certainly not. Was Shakspere’s assertion of Shylock’s humanity intended to reach farther than Shylock, and include, or be a plea for, the Jewish race as well as the special Jew? Without doubt it was. No greater mistake in criticism can be made than to treat the object of *The Merchant* as doctrinal. Its object was to weave the casket and bond stories into one happy whole, and to exhibit the characters of Shylock, Portia, and Antonio, and their lesser satellites, and to produce out of the conflicting chances on which happiness and life were set, that thing of beauty, that joy for ever, that the play is, “a symphony of grace and fierceness, mercy and vengeance, friendship and love, and fiend-like hate, of wit and humour too, all harmonized by the quiet strains of Heaven’s own choir of stars” (*Leopold Sh.*, Introd. p. xli.). But when, in picturing what Christ, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” had become in the brutal utterance of that most beautifully unselfish Christian Antonio, Shakspere, with his fairness to all men, could not forbear showing that this religious intolerance had degraded the Jew even more than the Christian; the Jew yet shared the common humanity that all the children of Adam inherited, and had the same right to turn fiend, to indulge revenge, that the Christian had. In the face of this climax to Shylock’s speech, how can it be contended that the *object*, the main purpose, of the play is to put forward “a plea for toleration towards the Jews”? Had that been Shakspere’s object, would he have clinched his argument with that “revenge,” the claim that Jews had a right to turn devils as freely as Christians had? Was there no noble Jew in history, no suffering one, specially no woman, in romance, through whom he could have put forth his plea more effectively than through Shylock? Assuredly there were many. I reject then the “object” view. I reject

also any connection of Lopez, executed (most brutally) as a Portingale with "other Portingales," on June 7, 1594, with the Shylock of (almost certainly) 1596, when all minds were taken up with the Cadiz expedition. But, I believe that, in doing justice to Shylock as a man, Shakspere meant to do justice to all of Shylock's race.

BY FRANK MARSHALL.

IT is not necessary to suppose that Shakspere had any especial views with regard to the removal of Jewish disabilities in his portrayal of the character of Shylock. Shakspere was not a *doctrinaire*; he was essentially a dramatist, and possessed in a greater degree than any other author the faculty of entering into the feelings of the characters which he introduced into his plays. In Shylock, at least as far as we can judge of the character from the written words, he placed himself in the position of a member of a conquered and crushed nation, living among people who had tolerated his presence only because he was useful to them, who either fettered his civil and religious liberty by the most vexatious and unjust laws, or who, while professing to regard all sects as equal in the eye of the law, amply atoned for such theoretical generosity by the meanest and cruelest system of social tyranny. Not only did the written law of Venice take care to surround the Christian subject of the State with most elaborate provisions against any possible malice of the Jew, but the unwritten law of public opinion permitted the Christian citizen to insult and revile the Jewish settler without any judicial or social penalty. Such a man as Shylock was, temperate, thrifty, and inferior in intellectual capacity to few of those about him; proud of his descent from the chosen people of God; fanatical in his adherence to a creed the principle of which was "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"—such a man, in face of an organized hypocrisy,—and the constitution of Venice, according to Shakspere, was neither more nor less—must have said to himself over and over again, "The law of Venice says that Jew and Christian are equal in its eyes; if ever I can get the advantage of a Christian I will prove whether the law lies, or whether it does not." Shylock had no conception of what mercy was, and so far he had but an imperfect conception of justice; for all justice worthy of the name must be tempered by mercy. He never asked for *justice*, but for *judgment*. He could not comprehend that justice which forbade the exactation of a penalty which was not equitable but malicious. In short, the law in which he believed was a law. Can we blame Shylock for this narrow-mindedness? What was the law, the unwritten law, which guided the Christians in their treatment of him? Was it not the law of that nation whose prophet "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal," instead of that new law founded by Him whose last words were a prayer for forgiveness for those who had most injured Him? There is no greater proof of Shakspere's marvellous dramatic art than this, that in spite of the repulsive vindictiveness of Shylock, when he goes out of the so-called Court of Justice crushed by the utter failure of his schemes, and by the mocking taunts of his triumphant adversaries, we cannot help asking ourselves, "What might this man not have been had he encountered from the

Christians amongst whom he lived that noble forbearance and unwearying mercy which they professed, but did not practise?" Injustice, however plausible, creates monsters of crime in one shape or another; faith, however sincere, is useless unless we practise *in its entirety* what we believe. These two principles are impressed upon our hearts as we contemplate the character of Shylock, the grasping usurer, the relentless avenger of past injuries, with that of Antonio, the generous friend, the most merciful of creditors, the comforter of the distressed, the pattern of manly resignation, but with this one blot on his character, that in compliance with a corrupted state of public opinion he could reconcile it to his conscience to heap contumely and insults on one who had done him no wrong, but who "was a Jew."

BY JAMES SPEDDING.

THE best contribution I can offer to this discussion is the expression of an old man's difficulty in accepting these new discoveries of profound moral and political designs underlying Shakspere's choice and treatment of his subjects. I believe that he was a man of business, that his principal business was to produce plays which would draw. I believe that he took the story of the caskets and of the pound of flesh because he thought he could combine them (I forget whether he found them together or put them together) into a good romantic comedy that was likely to succeed, and I think he managed it very well. But if, instead of looking about for a story to "please" the Globe audience, he had been in search of a subject under cover of which he might steal into their minds "a more tolerant feeling towards the Hebrew race," I cannot think that he would have selected for his hero a rich Jewish merchant, plotting the murder of a Christian rival by means of a fraudulent contract, which made death the penalty of non-payment at the day, and insisting on the exaction of it. In a modern Christian audience it seems to be possible for a skilful actor to work on the feelings of the audience so far as to make a man engaged in such a business an object of respectful sympathy. But can anybody believe that, in times when this would have been much more difficult, Shakspere would have chosen such a case as a favourable one to suggest toleration to a public prejudiced against Jews? A lawyer retained to defend a man who has kicked his wife to death will try to prove that his client was an injured husband and had served her right, and this may succeed with a jury that have had experience of conjugal provocations. But if his business were to plead for a mitigation of the severity of the law *against husbands*, he would surely keep his injured friend's case as far out of sight as he could. I do not believe, in fact, that Shakspere, either in choosing the subject or treating it, was thinking about Jewish grievances or disabilities at all either way. What he had to think about was, how he could introduce into a *comedy*, without putting everything out of tune, an incident so shocking, and a project so savage, that "the imagination almost refuses to approach it." And I think he managed this also very skilfully, by first depriving Shylock of all pretence of grievance or excuse, which was done by the offer of all the

money due to him upon his bond, with twice as much more to compensate him for the very short time he had had to wait for it beyond the appointed day—an offer which leaves him without any conceivable motive for preferring the pound of flesh except the worst—and then dismissing him with a punishment very much lighter than he deserved.

BY ISRAEL DAVIS.

IT is, perhaps, going a little too far to say that Shakspere wrote *The Merchant of Venice* as a plea for toleration towards the Jews. But a slight modification of Mr. Hawkins's thesis is easily maintainable. I think it must be admitted that Shakspere deliberately and consciously chose to represent his Jew as a human being. Shakspere was too thoroughly an artist to write a play with a moral purpose. In regard to the essence of a drama, he was guided irresistibly by a keen appreciation of the real nature of men's thoughts and feelings. As he had the philosophic spirit he was entirely free from a common failing of common men, to regard with scorn and hate everything which is unlike themselves. The more unlike it was to usual experience the more would an object attract his curious observation; and to comprehend a living thing the first necessity is to sympathize with it. As the result, Shakspere's Jew is an interesting character, not evil by nature, but made evil by the treatment to which he has been subjected. The moral suggests itself that if the Jew had been treated in a better way he would have been a better man; and Shakspere cannot have been unconscious that he preached that moral, although the purpose of his play was to preach no lesson, but to describe human life. By other writers who had dealt with the story of the Jew he had been exhibited as an impossibly malignant creature. It was reserved for Shakspere to picture the unhappy Jew tortured and outraged, his self-respect and his pride of race wounded by Antonio, his friends cooled, his enemies heated, and his business stopped by Antonio, the memory of his dead wife profaned, the love of his daughter alienated by Antonio's friend, and the girl herself carried off, as her father believes, in Antonio's ship. It is a being enraged by some of these wrongs who devises the bond, and it is one driven frantic by the accumulation of them all who insists upon the penalty. Shakspere put into Shylock's mouth the immortal words beginning, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" in which the common humanity of Jews, made like other men in the image of God, is insisted upon; and also the argument which must have smitten for many years afterwards the consciences of the traffickers in the slave trade,—

You have among you many a purchased slave, &c.

The dramatist must have been aware that the tendency of what he wrote was to represent the Jew as no worse than in the like circumstances another man would have become, and to ridicule fancied superiorities of races or religions, as he obviously does when in another play he makes a sottish clown say, "If thou wilt, go with me to the ale-house; if not, thou art an Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name of a Christian." Perhaps the truest test of Shakspere's meaning is the impression which the play, when

carefully interpreted, makes upon those who see it. Mr. Irving makes us feel by his faithful and reverent interpretation that, in spite of Shylock's sordid anxiety to destroy a competitor, his character has nobility and distinction, that his intellect has quickness and clearness, that his fate is unduly hard. So far and no farther could the process of rehabilitation go in Shakspere's days. It was reserved for a latter-day genius to carry the idealization of the Jew to a higher pitch, but it was a greater step for Shakspere in the sixteenth century to create the Shylock of *The Merchant of Venice* than for George Eliot in our own times to imagine the Mordecai of *Daniel Deronda*.

BY DAVID ANDERSON.

IT seems to me that the key to Shylock's character and conduct is contained in the four lines:—

Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last,
You spurned me such a day ; another time
You called me dog, and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies.

He argues that, having been insulted, he must exact revenge according to the old law of his nation and the dispensation of the prophet, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Possibly trade rivalry has had something to do with Antonio's vindictiveness, for we do not find that the remainder of the personages of the play entertain any particular ill-feeling towards the Jew. Whether or not Shakspere studied Shylock from a living model, and whether he intended to enlist our sympathies on his behalf, must probably remain a matter of conjecture to the end of time. But that the character is eminently natural and consistent with historical truth I shall proceed to show. The poet flourished in an age somewhat similar to our own ; and to him the Protestant Reformation and the dawn of polite learning in England were what the French Revolution and the freedom of the press are to us. And he had so far conquered the prejudices of the dark ages that before judging the Jew he could put himself in the Jew's place, and could thoroughly realize how Shylock, born of a most ancient and most proud ancestry, felt himself the equal, if not the superior, of the highest dignitaries of Venice. Antonio might spit upon the hated gaberdine—the badge of the alien people—as other Christians—forgetful of the Master's orders—had robbed and murdered other Jews in cold blood ; as other Christians had blasphemed against his beloved faith and driven his fathers forth to be the scapegoats in the wilderness of the world. But fetters could not bind nor whips tame the indomitable spirit of Shylock. True to the old Arabian blood, he would be revenged ! Here, in England, to-day, the Jewish citizen is on an equality in all things with his Christian fellow-subjects. But to understand the character of Shylock it is absolutely necessary to study the history of his time, and note to what persecutions and oppression his brethren were subjected, and what treatment they had endured in every country in Europe during several previous centuries. I see no reason why the Jewish race shiould be

ashamed of Shylock ; and I venture to suggest that at the period of the play there may have been hundreds of such characters in the cities and towns of Italy. Save for his revengeful spirit, the Jew compares favourably with the other principal characters of the play. Bassanio is confessedly a fortune-hunter. Antonio deceives his fashionable friends as to the true state of his affairs. Jessica deceives and robs her father, and Lorenzo receives the stolen goods. It is not surprising, under the circumstances, that Shylock appears unamiable. There were but very few Jews in England at the time when *The Merchant of Venice* was produced, probably in 1594 ; and therefore I am not able to subscribe to the theory that the play may have been written with the object of lessening the prejudices of the time against the Jews. It appears to my mind far more reasonable to believe that, having the character of a Jew to depict, Shakspere should display more of the artist than the advocate, and that unerring instinct of a genius which always went straight to the heart of the matter in hand. So far as I am able to divine the meaning of the poet, Mr. Irving has grasped the character of the Jew of Venice in all its details and apparent inconsistencies. No longer a mountebank or a fiend in human shape, Shakspere's and Irving's Shylock is a product of history, and, as some might contend, on the poet's part of an insight little short of revelation.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

My thesis may be more correctly expressed if I state it in another form—namely, that in drawing the character of Shylock the dramatist indirectly but deliberately advanced a plea for toleration towards the Jews. His chief object, of course, was to make an attractive play out of the casket and bond stories, and after that, as I believe, to suggest that the worst passions are engendered in even the best natures by such unmerited degradation as that to which the Jews were exposed. For this purpose he covertly sought to engage our sympathies on the side of the Jew by surrounding him with a halo of Hebraic thought and sentiment, by endowing him with an originally fine nature and intellectual strength, by laying obvious stress upon the inherited and personal wrongs which goad him to fury against the Christian, by causing us to withhold our respect from his enemies, and lastly by making him assert in a passage of singular cogency and power the common humanity of Jew and Christian. The outline of the character is dark and forbidding, but the anti-Jewish prejudices of the day were too strong to allow of its being made otherwise. Mr. Martin, I submit, does not refute my theory by saying that nobody in the play urges anything like a plea for toleration. As I remarked last month—and the fact seems to have been lost sight of by Mr. Davis and Mr. Marshall—the dramatist's meaning can be gathered only by those who read between the lines, as he was too great a master of his art to preach a moral. Mr. Martin says that Jew and Christian are alike intolerant. Here, it would seem, he overlooks an essential difference. The intolerance of the Christian is purely gratuitous ; that of the Jew is provoked by oppression and insult. Mr. Martin denies that the doctrine of religious toleration is even illustrated by the dramatist, but admits that

the play indirectly inculcates the unwisdom of religious persecution. This is surely contradictory, and implies that Shakspere could not have been fully conscious of the necessary meaning of what he wrote. Mr. Furnivall concedes all I contend for when he allows that the assertion of Shylock's humanity was intended to be a plea for the Jewish race, but he apparently forgets that in Shakspere's time a "noble Jew" would not have been suffered to appear on the stage, and even if *The Merchant of Venice* was written in 1596—a doubtful point—the fact would not do away with my argument that Shylock first appeared on the stage at a time when the ancient hatred of the Jews had been intensified by the supposed treason of Dr. Lopez* and the probability of an irruption of Israelites into London. The two years which had elapsed since the execution of Lopez would not have sufficed to allay this bitterness. The conditions under which Shakspere wrote the play should be borne in mind when Mr. Spedding's remarks are considered, remarks which indicate a better acquaintance with the letter than with the spirit of the play, especially when he says that Shylock's punishment, though involving a renunciation of a cherished faith, was lighter than it ought to have been. The Christian—and the fact is worth noting—talks to the Jew of "mercy," but shows him none. Mr. Anderson's contention that there were but few Jews in England in 1594 is not to the point; do we always fail to hate what we have not seen?

IMPRESSIONS OF JOHN BALDWIN BUCKSTONE.

BY TOM TAYLOR.

WHEN the Editor of *The Theatre* asked me to furnish him with my personal recollections of the late J. B. Buckstone, I hesitated at first, under the feeling that I could say little which would be new to the readers of *The Theatre*, or which could throw special light on either the man or the actor. This may seem odd, when it is remembered that I have written many pieces for the Haymarket under his management, and all of them with prominent parts for him; that, in the natural course of things, I have been thrown into frequent and familiar intercourse with the man, and might be supposed to be able to give traits of Buckstone with his stage-paint off, in illustration of the Buckstone the public knew and liked so well with his stage-paint on. But I find myself able to do so little in this way, that I am myself rather surprised at the meagreness of my recollections of the popular actor and manager apart from the parts and plays I wrote for him and his theatre. The fact is that I never knew Buckstone in his domestic life, or was in his company in his hours of relaxation. To me

* Mr. Furnivall, in a private letter, has kindly rectified an error into which I fell in writing the article on "Stage Jews." The sentence relating to the fate of Dr. Lopez should read:—"There is no official record of the sentence having been carried into effect, but Stowe (*Annales*, ed. 1605, p. 1278) shows that Lopez was executed in a very cruel manner."

he was always the manager and man of business, as far as he was ever a man of business. His deafness raised a wall of separation between him and all but a small circle of intimates; though he was so quick of intelligence in matters of his craft that you might have long watched him, not only on the stage, but even at rehearsal, without discovering that he could hear no word of what was passing about him. He was guided, in his by-play as well as in his spoken part, entirely by his knowledge of the piece acquired in reading it, and by his quick eye, which could catch much of what his stage-interlocutors said from the movement of their lips and the expression of their faces. I remember his telling me that it was only by this means he knew when his cue to speak came.

His experience as a dramatist and his popularity as an actor were the only requisites of a manager that he brought with him into the Haymarket. I purposely exclude his amiability and kindness. However personally pleasant in his intercourse with actors and authors these may have made him, and however the absence of jealousy and self-assertion may have aided him in the selection of actors and in the casting of pieces, it is certain that his good-nature and easiness worked with his infirmity to throw him far more into the hands of servants and subordinates than a manager can safely afford to be thrown, and that this had much to do with the gradual decline in the prosperity of the Haymarket Theatre under his management.

Then Buckstone's pleasant personal qualities co-operated with his weaknesses to develope a natural *insouciance* and improvidence, which told heavily against his management, leading him to heap up heavy burdens of obligation on ruinous terms during less prosperous times, to be discharged out of the profits of more prosperous. This is the only way of accounting for the ever-growing difficulties under which he at last succumbed. Besides other qualities that were lacking to him, he was singularly deficient in that never-hasting, never-resting foresightedness, that power and habit of shaping the future, which more than any other quality goes to the making of a successful manager; which takes him, as far as he can be taken, out of the shallows and quicksands of haphazard in which most so-called managers allow themselves to drift helplessly about at the mercy of the incalculable forces of "fluke" and the uncharted currents of popular caprice. With all his cleverness, dramatic tact and experience, long knowledge of the taste of the town, and freedom from personal jealousy, Buckstone, to my notion, was but a haphazard manager, content to be far too dependent at all times on those about him, and often ill-served in consequence; too ready to stave off difficulties at any price, and devoid of all that side of the "business" quality which makes preparation in good weather for the needs and chances of bad.

My connection with him as dramatic author began in 1857 with the comedy of *Victims*, in which he played Butterby—this was four years after he entered on the management of the Haymarket, hampered, I believe, by burdensome conditions attached to the lease, from which I hope, and doubt not, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft will be free—and ended in 1869, with *New Men and Old Acres*. In the interval I wrote, in November, 1857, and produced

at his theatre, the comedy of *An Unequal Match*, with Miss Amy Sedgwick as the heroine, Hester Grazebrook, and Buckstone in the part of Botcherby; in June, 1859, *The Contested Election* (suggested by the revelations of the St. Alban's election proceedings), in which he played Peckover, "the President of the Blue Lambs;" in February, 1860, *The Overland Route*, suggested by the actual incidents of the wreck of a home-ward-bound Peninsular and Oriental steamer in the Red Sea, in which piece he played Lovibond; *The Babes in the Wood*, in which he played Beetle, the henpecked and over-driven lodging-house keeper, in May, 1860; and in the same year, a forgotten comedy, *A Duke in Difficulties*, founded on a story in Blackwood, in which, if he played, it was some part I do not now remember; *Our American Cousin*,* in which he was the Asa Trenchard to Mr. Sothern's immortal Dundreary, in 1861, the year before the Great Exhibition; and in October, 1869, *New Men and Old Acres*, in collaboration with my friend A. W. Dubourg, in which Buckstone was the original Bunter.

It is worth noting in how many of these plays the part acted by Compton is at least as good as that played by Buckstone. He was quite above the weakness usually attributed to the actor, but often unjustly, in my own experience, of unwillingness to allow any rival his "bit of fat," when he has the power to prevent it. Buckstone, in my experience of him, was always glad that the other comic parts of the pieces he played in should be strong, and never interposed to prevent any of that spicing of other parts with the suddenly-suggested good things which often spring up out of the accidents of rehearsal. His deafness prevented his taking that active part in the rehearsal and stage-management of his pieces for which by his experience as manager, actor, and dramatist together he was so unusually well-qualified. In this particular one saw the evil influence of his infirmity and constitutional easiness combined, in throwing far too much power into the hands of subordinates not always worthy of the confidence reposed in them. I have no doubt that both his own interests and those of the theatre, which were, indeed, inseparable, suffered severely from this cause.

During the earlier part of my connection with the Haymarket, the theatre was highly and steadily prosperous. It had started favourably, and while the strong company with which the new management had been inaugurated was at its best and still fresh to the public, while the manager was bringing out new works by new authors, or practised and successful old ones, all went well. Still, I should rather ascribe Buckstone's share of this prosperity to what he contributed as actor than as manager. The Haymarket, admirably situated, had a great *prestige* as the old home of high comedy in London after the two great theatres, which already, since the too short interval of Macready's management, had lost all importance except

* Suggested to me by the actual story of a young American backwoodsman, whom my friend, Sir Edward Poore, encountered in a hunting expedition in the far West, and finding him a distant cousin, belonging to a branch of the Poore family which had emigrated to America in Puritan days, invited him, with his unsophisticated old father and mother, to visit his father's seat at Cuffnells, in the New Forest, where their strangeness to the ways of high-life civilization gave rise to many amusing situations.

for pantomime and spectacle. It is a comfort, while I write, to have *Henry V.** in possession of the boards of Drury Lane. This is a spectacle admirably costumed; with its scenes, groupings, and stage movement, devised by the Shaksperian enthusiasm and admirable taste and judgment of the late Charles Calvert, to give wider resonance to Shakspere's spirit-stirring trumpet-blast of English national feeling.

Buckstone, it may be said, was manager of a comedy-theatre, and in that character had no room for such enthusiasms or appeals to the artistic and imaginative sympathies of his public as Calvert in his Manchester management. But there was a great deal that the manager of the Hay-market might have done, and did not do. Though always producing his pieces with due attention to scenic and stage effect, costume, and so forth, he took little heed to freshen the old blood of his company with new. He rode to death the sound managerial principle of getting a good company and keeping it. The public were allowed to see the same old favourites night after night, season after season, year after year. This was very good as far as it went, but they did not see any sufficiently systematic engrafting of new talent on the old; any evidence of a vigilant lookout kept for rising ability in London and the provinces; any adequate effort to present, along with the stock English comedies of last century and those of the present day, the best comedies of the olden time, Shakspere's at their head. There was, in short, a want of activity, energy, and imaginative aspiration and life about Buckstone's management, much of which might be accounted for by his infirmity, but which resulted even more from his easy-going temperament and his growing reluctance to face difficulties and disagreeables by any less-ruinous expedient than paying any price for money when it was wanted.

On what slight threads success both of actors and managers may hang, some incidents in the history of *Our American Cousin* may serve to illustrate. It was after the positive *fiasco* of *The Duke in Difficulties*, and the comparative *fiasco* of *Babes in the Wood*, that Buckstone first told me of his intention to engage one Sothern, who had made a great hit in Lord Dundreary, in a piece which he understood was mine, called *Our American Cousin*. I told him how I had written the piece at Mr. Webster's request that I would supply a part for Joseph Slingsbee, who had had some success as an American low comedian a few years before; how the actor had read the piece and liked the part of Asa Trenchard; how by his death the piece

* I ask pardon for this digression, in honour less of Mr. Rignold's present production of *Henry V.*, than of Charles Calvert, the most ardent and enterprising of provincial managers, who for ten years drew the vast population of Manchester and its surrounding hives of monotonous, unrelieved, and unlovely labour, through the Prince's Theatre, to witness, for some three months yearly, a masterpiece of Shakspere, put on the stage with a completeness, care, and taste then unequalled save by the managements of Macready, Phelps, and Charles Kean; thus playing, as I cannot but think, a part unparalleled by any other influence about him, as an educator of popular taste and an inspirer of popular imagination. Calvert was a manager in the truest sense of the word, with ambitious principles and enthusiasms of a high order. Why did he never find in a London theatre an arena in which he might have shown to the capital, and under completer conditions, as far as acting goes, what he had to be content with showing the provinces!

had been thrown on Mr. Webster's hands ; how I had got it from him in exchange for another piece, *Helping Hands*, and found a market for it in America, where at Laura Keene's theatre, in New York, it had been the great success of its time, thanks originally to Jefferson's Asa Trenchard, and afterwards and gradually to Sothern's Dundreary, the development by the actor of a third-rate part into unlooked-for prominence. But, I added, I had always understood that Dundreary was an extravagant caricature of an idiotic English nobleman, and that I should have thought, however the burlesque picture of an impossible original might have been relished in the United States, it would not go down here, where the extravagance would be likely to disgust more than the humour amuse. "That may be," said Buckstone, "but our business has been very bad, and we must try *something*, so I have engaged Sothern. He has played the part eight hundred times already in America, and I hear he has made a great thing of it. I want to know how much you want for the piece?" "How long do you expect to run it?" "Oh, some six weeks or two months." We agreed I was to have £150. Sothern appeared, succeeded ; the piece ran for more than a year,—the year of the second Great Exhibition—and realized above £20,000 clear profit for the manager, made the actor's professional future, and all by a fluke. When it had been running some three or four weeks with success so little marked that Buckstone was thinking of "taking it out of the bill," Charles Mathews coming in to see it one night, and hearing of this intention, strongly advised Buckstone to "hold on." "It is a wonderful impersonation, and the public will take to it. Wait a little, and see if they don't." Buckstone took the advice, and held on, with the result I have just summed up. When the success of the piece was assured the question was raised as to my right to any payment for it. By first production in America it was contended that my copyright was forfeited, and that legally I could claim nothing. The cases decided on the last Copyright Act supported this view of the law. I have no doubt that if Buckstone had stood upon his legal right he could have refused to pay me the £150 he had promised without the light of legal advice ; but I am bound to say he paid me the £150, after taking care, naturally perhaps, to let me know I had no right to it. I hope the new Copyright Act will do away with the monstrous absurdity that first production of a play by an English author in the United States, with which we have no copyright convention, shall suffice to destroy the English author's copyright in this country.

Nothing could be pleasanter than my relations with Buckstone as an actor. Quick, intelligent, and appreciative, he saw the points of a part as quickly as he made them, with certainty and precision, only he was apt to be puzzled with technical phraseology, such as I gave him a good deal of in Botcherby, in the *Unequal Match*, and was not always to be relied on in passages when it had to be used. When I first knew him he was a quick and sure "study," and rarely needed the prompter. Latterly he got very uncertain of his words, even in his oldest and most familiar parts. As I have said, his deafness prevented him from being of use as a stage-manager, and he did not seem to me to appreciate adequately the vast importance

of having this most vital part of the work of his stage adequately done. At first, and for a long time, his team of old hands, working well together and knowing each other's points, stage-managed their pieces very much for themselves. But this grew into slovenliness; and when some of the best of the old team went—in particular Compton and Chippendale—there was a visible deterioration in the style of the Haymarket productions new and old. Stars, too, intruded, and were allowed to work their usual mischief. Their appearance in a theatrical heaven is, according to my experience, invariably malign. The manager who is drawn within their sphere of attraction will surely have to pay by general deterioration of his business, for any feverish flush of passing prosperity he may owe to such starry influences. It was so at the Haymarket, as elsewhere. And with years and difficulties, Buckstone's powers as actor, and energies, such as they were, as manager, went on surely but slowly decaying, and it was evident that the fortunes of the Haymarket were hopelessly wrecked under its existing crew and captain. Still, the outward conditions of success are so strongly attached to the theatre, that I have no doubt that under the new and energetic management to which it has passed it is safe of a new lease of fortune.

As actor the English stage has seen few more genial and humorous mimics than Buckstone. His art was of the English style, broad and laughter-making. He always seemed to attach more importance to the humorous than to any other quality of the part he acted. But he did not overlook the general aspect of his parts, though he clothed them all in a uniform garb of the Buckstonian humour, conveyed through the inimitable eye-twinkle and mouth-twist all knew so well, and the rich, oily chuckle of a voice whose sound could produce a roar before the actor was seen. He usually provoked laughter, however, without forcing, and was admirable in the quiet, unerring power with which he made a point. Considering his deafness, it was wonderful how thoroughly well he managed to pitch his voice, always audible without undue strain or stress. And he was a very fair actor, never taking more than his due share of the stage, or exaggerating his by-play so as to distract attention from others. I never saw in him any trace of personal jealousy or unfairness, on or off the stage. But his merits as an actor were not more unmistakeable, to my mind, than his shortcomings as a manager, on which I have dwelt already, and which were dependent on points in his character in which elements of good and bad were curiously mingled. On the latter of these I do not intend to dwell. It is pleasanter to expatiate on that which none can deny, the strenuous support he gave to all efforts at helping his brethren; above all, the large part he bore in forwarding the General Theatrical Fund, at whose dinners his presence and annual speech as treasurer were as certain as they were welcome and helpful.

The kindness he showed to his brethren he extended to all about him, and whatever his weaknesses, most of them in the direction of that easy-going *insouciance* to which I have so often referred, he conciliated personal regard by his geniality, personal *bonhomie*, and absence of assumption. But I must repeat, in closing this paper, he in no sense fulfilled the

conditions required in the manager of the leading comedy theatre of London. I have said nothing of him as a dramatic author, in which character he had no common merits, both as a melodramatist and farce-writer. This is merely a brief record of personal impressions, and he had ceased to write for the theatre before I came in contact with him.

A THESPIAN ACADEMY.

BY DUTTON COOK.

ONE hundred and fifty years ago some attempt was made to establish a sort of Thespian Academy or academical theatre, especially with the view of "improving the taste of the stage, and training young actors and actresses for the supply of the patent theatres." Mr. Aaron Hill, eminent at the time as the author or adapter of *Zara*, *Merope*, *Athelwold*, *Alzira*, and other plays, was the originator of the scheme, and entertained very sanguine hopes of its success. He had much concerned himself about the state of the drama and the shortcomings of the players; he had, indeed, been the occasion of some trouble and offence by his pertinacity in these regards. He was a copious writer of letters, a publisher of pamphlets, and the editor of *The Prompster*, a theatrical periodical. The freedom of his dramatic criticisms had at one time involved him in a personal conflict with the great Mr. Quin; actor and critic met, it seems, in the Court of Requests, where "a scuffle ensued between them, which ended in the exchange of a few blows." His plan for forming a new and superior race of actors and founding "a tragic academy" was communicated in letters to the poet Thomson among other persons, and it is clear that Mr. Hill had taken some steps to give effect to his idea. He writes in August 1733: "I have in a manner the whole company already formed, and can, I believe, be in readiness to open by the beginning of November at farthest with a race of plays and entertainments so new in themselves, and the manner in which they will be acted, that the success will, I think, be insured by the novelty." He further states that a patent had been offered him for a consideration of £400 per year, but that he thought a licence might be obtained upon cheaper terms, and he resolves to "put into all proper hands a pamphlet explaining the design, and why it deserves encouragement," and "to propose a subscription for six nights to a tragedy, and a fashionable folly in the rear of it, by way of trial whether the company and design are worth encouraging or no." It is presently explained that the tragedy in question was his own *Zara*, an adaptation to the English stage of Voltaire's *Zaïre*.

The project did not prosper, however. Two years later Mr. Hill is still deplored the state of the stage, which permits no experiments to be made in regard to "a better choice of plays and a juster art of acting," and still looking forward, after "long and impartial reflection," to a new undertaking which may greatly mend matters. On this head he is so strongly convinced that he meditates a trial at his own expense, "without any subscription or

other support than the countenance of a dozen or two of untaxed encouragers, properly-chosen great names, "to be affixed to the following declaration:—" "Whereas certain gentlemen have proposed at their own expense to attempt an improvement, under the name of a Tragic Academy, for extending and regulating theatrical diversions, and for instructing and educating actors in the practice of dramatic passions, and a power to express them strongly, the success of which laudable purpose might establish the reputation of the stage by appropriating its influence to the service of wisdom and virtue; our names are therefore subscribed in declaration that we will protect and give countenance to this useful undertaking so long as the same shall be carried on with a skill and attention correspondent to the proposal."

It was fondly hoped that Frederick, Prince of Wales, a liberal patron of literature and the drama, would permit his name to be placed at the head of Mr. Hill's list of "untaxed encouragers"; in that case Mr. Hill promised that in three months' time his friend Thomson should see established a new company of players "whose beginnings would make credible whatever improvements he wished for." The Prince's name was to have been a tower of strength to Mr. Hill—"all the effect of a patent," he writes, "without the noise and the difficulty"; and the opera-house in the Haymarket, for three or four nights weekly, was to have seen the outset of the experiment till success warranted the erection of a special edifice, "a new tragic theatre for extending and regulating the conduct of the stage, and appropriating its influence to the service of wisdom and virtue." But the Prince held aloof, and Mr. Hill's plan grew less and less practicable; he began, indeed, to question his own capacity for carrying it into operation. "I was pleased with the scheme," he writes, "until I came to consider where the names could be found, and by what means to engage them, without renouncing that retreat, that obscurity of choice, which I had assumed to myself as the share I laid claim to, among the most desirable blessings of liberty. Then I stopped, and began to discover a kind of inconsistency of purpose in the leisure and reflection which must be necessary for planning and conducting the design, opposed against the solicitation and address without which it would be found impossible to make it successful." Mr. Hill therefore renounced interference with the stage and its professors; he left the theatres to their "modish frequenters" and the "fools of fashion," who looked for nothing moral or instructive in the drama; he despaired of reform alike in the plays, the players, and the playgoers of his time.

In later days other proposals have been made for ameliorating the condition of the British theatre. Macready projected the occupation of the Lyceum by a sort of commonwealth of players; a "proprietary of performers, the best of each class formed into a supervising committee, and receiving, over and above their salaries, shares in proportion to their rank of salary, and percentage proportionate to their respective advances of money," the desperate state of the stage rendering some such measure very necessary. Further, he applied to the Lord Chamberlain for a personal license to perform the legitimate drama upon any stage, and memorialized the Queen for her special patronage, and for liberty to call his troop at Covent Garden "Her Majesty's Company of Performers." It was with the

view, presumably of benefitting the stage, that Mr. Webster offered a prize of £500 for the best five-act comedy; and that the late T. P. Cooke bequeathed a certain annual sum to the most skilled producers of nautical drama—the bequest being afterwards inequitably diverted from the playwrights and applied to the use of the players. In like manner, when that ill-starred institution, the Dramatic College, was first contrived under the happiest auspices, and amid general congratulations, there were day-dreamers and visionaries who looked forward not merely to the provision of a home for poor and effete players, but also to the establishment of a seminary for their children, and generally a school for the training and perfecting of the actors of the future. And now in this present year of grace we are favoured with proposals for the opening of a state-theatre, and the payment of the actors' salaries out of the national exchequer; private munificence waves in the face of the public a cheque for £1,000 towards the regeneration of the drama, and only demands that in due season other cheques shall be forthcoming to be similarly employed; while the advocates of a different nostrum proclaim that we need not so much a state-theatre as a Thespian Academy, a dramatic school wherein the youthful player may acquire his art; may learn to pronounce French and to read English verse; may be taught correct emphasis and accent, the value of prose composition and the balance of sentences; and find a "highly educated and cultured dramatic nursery," with courses of lectures by professors of various branches of art, libraries of costume and reference, lessons in fencing and deportment, and a theatre with practical instruction, &c.

These propositions have not a very feasible air, and are founded upon rather mistaken estimates of the actor and his art. A good education is in these times necessary to the player as to other persons, but it may be presumed that he does not require a special institution to teach him the common rudiments of learning. Many libraries of reference, including works upon costume, are already open to the public; teachers of languages abound, and probably the other graces and accomplishments enumerated can be easily acquired without calling into existence a dramatic nursery expressly to inculcate them. It may be understood that the Thespian Academy is to commence its functions where the ordinary school or college leaves off. Acting, however, is not one of the exact sciences; the histrionic student must eventually emerge from the shelter of his academy, quit the side of his preceptors, and depend upon his own individual exertions. Will he be the better and stronger for the hot-house training he has received? Will not the Thespian Academy be open to the charges brought against the other academies of fine art, to the effect that they "perpetuate mannerism, cramp originality, and fetter genius"? Haydon was wont to declare that "academies all over Europe were signals of distress thrown out to stop the decay of art"; while Dr. Waagen held that "the academic system gave an artificial elevation to mediocrity; that it deadened natural talent, and introduced into the freedom of art an unsalutary degree of authority and interference." Our Royal Academy has produced Royal Academicians; otherwise it can hardly be said to have advanced the interests of art. Mr. Froude once sighed for a Royal Academy of Literature; he was not allowed to

suppose, however, that such an institution was at all desired by the literary profession generally. As a rule, indeed, academies are but empirical societies in aid of mediocrity and incapacity. It may reasonably be doubted whether a Thespian academy would be of any real utility or command any measure of respect. In a certain sense the artist, histrionic or otherwise, should be a student all his life; but he must study not as a pupil, but independently and for himself, observing life and nature at first hand with his own eye, and not merely through the spectacles of his veteran teachers. In truth, after he has fairly acquired the rudiments of his art, an artist is his own best instructor if he is aiming at originality, and is not content with mere imitativeness. Here is the evidence of Macready, a noble actor, well entitled to be heard upon this subject. He describes a visit he paid in 1845 to the Conservatoire, and he writes: "Heard the pupils of Samson go through their course of theatrical instruction. It is an institution of the Government to train pupils, who are elected to the school, for the stage. I was interested, and saw the inefficiency of the system clearly; it was teaching *conventionalism*—it was perpetuating the mannerism of the French stage, which is all mannerism. Genius would be cramped, if not maimed and distorted, by such a course."

MANNERS ON THE STAGE.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

IT has been stated, and restated again and again by critics, that the stage is no longer the true mirror of nature as regards the manners and customs of society, in pieces which treat of modern life in the higher classes; and, in a paper which appeared not so very long ago, in a monthly contemporary, it is positively asserted, that at the present time "Gentlemen and scholars . . . are no longer allured by the fascinations of the stage," and that "the ranks of the profession are recruited from the lowest of middle-class and artisan life, and less respectable sources." It goes on to say that, "if you find gentlemen, you must seek among the veterans of the stage; amongst the rising generation you will search in vain, the genus is unknown." And it even adds, that "under such auspices we can scarcely wonder at the lamentable lack of enthusiasm among young actors, who are too apt to regard acting as a mechanical calling, merely representing so much a week."

Now, it happens that, perhaps, there has never been a period on the English stage when so many young men of good family and education have appeared on the boards—young men who have worked hard, and in the true spirit of artists, and have won their way to a high position in the profession, the very men to exhibit in modern comedy manners which are a real reflex of the manners of society. It would take, indeed, a long catalogue to enumerate all the young men of birth and breeding, who, for the love of the art, and in obedience to the special vocation which they have found within themselves, have made the stage their calling. In mentioning Hare (Fairs), Clayton (Calthorpe), Arthur Cecil (Blunt), Kendal (Grimston), Conway

(Coulson), Herbert (Eden), Carton (Critchett), Sothern, Bancroft, Corney Grain, Lytton Sothern, Forbes Robertson, and his brothers, the list is very far from complete. Why, then, this repeated, but wholly unfounded outcry that we have no "gentlemen" on the stage? a lamentation usually followed up by a comparison between the English and French stages; in that respect very greatly to the disadvantage of the former.

In certain cases it may be admitted that there is an obvious want of polished manners on our stage. But these cases are exceptional, and are becoming rarer every day. I allude to those "comediettas" in which the characters are supposed to be men and women of so-called "High Life"—to the one-act pieces which have had a success on the Parisian stage, where they were played by first-rate artists, and which have found their way to London theatres, generally carelessly adapted, and played by the inferior actors of a company; the leading actors strenuously refusing, as a rule, to play in first or last pieces. For some years past everything has been sacrificed to the drama or comedy played in the centre of the evening. Consequently all lesser comediettas and pieces of that stamp are now despised by the "stars," and by the managers (they are supposed to bring in no money), and, consequently, by the public. They have been replaced by farces more or less of an uproarious description, to begin or end the evening's entertainment, and even to these little heed is paid. Conversation is carried on in no whispered tones by such of the audience as have already strolled into their seats; box-keepers open and shut doors with the greatest possible noise, and talk with utter indifference, and the performers have to struggle on against confusion on the one hand, and ill-manners on the other. Any arguments, consequently, based on the representation of such small pieces cannot be taken into consideration.

It must be admitted, at the same time, that an impediment to ease, and nature, and refined acting, has been thrown in the way of actors of education and breeding by the words given to them to speak. It has been very rare, until lately, that the language of real life has been put into the mouths of actors. The absence of all truth to nature in the "stagey" dialogue has rendered it almost impossible for them to appear natural in manner. There is no doubt that theatrical dialogue must, necessarily, be rendered more condensed, more pointed, and, if possible, more brilliant than is generally to be heard in ordinary society. In fact, colour must be given to the language, as rouge must be applied to the face to produce the necessary stage effect. The real art lies in the knowledge of the "how much to use," whilst leaving the appearance of true naturalness, without which no impression of reality can be obtained, and which all true artists connected with the stage would be desirous of conveying.

Another great hindrance to ease and naturalness in stage manners has arisen from what is called "stage-management" in our English theatres. Fortunately a new era in this important branch of the theatrical profession commenced as long ago as during the management of Madame Vestris at the Olympic Theatre. As far as I can gather, she was the first to introduce the more modern school of stage movement and stage manners into England; and an anecdote is related of an eminent old actor, under her management, who

complained that it was impossible for him to act as long as the stage was encumbered by new-fangled drawing-room furniture. From this time efforts have been made gradually, and with more or less of success, to rectify old abuses, and to substitute manners of society and natural movements for old-fashioned traditions and prejudices. What has been done during the last few years towards the improvement of a department so intimately connected with the true delineation of "manners" on the stage may be seen in the comedies produced in latter years at the Prince of Wales's Théâtre under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, and at the Court Theatre under that of Mr. Hare. The old stage *habitués* may sneer at this new style as the "tea-cup and saucer school;" but all unprejudiced observers cannot fail to acknowledge the great improvement which has been attained.

In fact it lies in the power of the stage-manager to make or mar reality and truth in stage manners. It is for him to arrange the position and movements of the actors on his stage, and to make all appear, to the best of his intelligence, effective at the same time as natural. If he be a man of intellect, endowed with strong dramatic instincts, and at the same time with the power of inventing details, he may be of the utmost advantage to all the members of a company, and add to the fame of any actor by the "business" and stage movements which he may have the cleverness to arrange for him. If he have not the necessary qualities to "stage-manage" according to the improved lights of the present day, he may do irreparable injury to the younger artists placed under his control, and materially hamper the more experienced. He may make an actor appear the very reverse of a true exponent of modern manners by enforcing actions and movements which are false and unnatural, by introducing into a modern play old-fashioned theatrical customs, and by obstinately forcing on the stage traditional habits, which he has been told are those "of gentlemen," but which are certainly not those of "gentlemen" of the present day. Fortunately, the latter specimen of the stage-manager autocrat has almost disappeared at the present time, thanks to the progress of the despised "tea-cup and saucer school."

The improvement in stage manners has not been gradually forced on modern theatres without considerable opposition. There are still those who cannot forget the habits prevalent in the "good old times." The crossing from the centre of the stage and back again after every effective speech; the placing all the performers at equal distances from one another, so that their outstretched finger-tips would just meet; the restraint of all movement except "crossings;" the prohibition to be seated during a tragic or strongly emotional performance; the carrying down of two chairs to the footlights, where two actors were to be seated with their faces full to the audience, to indulge in a friendly dialogue; the hundred other old unnatural habits. Happily, however, these absurd traditions have almost entirely disappeared in modern plays.

How hampering they are to all real nature and ease of action may be still witnessed at the performances of the Comédie Française in their old comedies, say those of Molière. Out of respect it must be supposed for the great author, all the traditions of his time are strictly observed at the Théâtre Français. Not only is the old stage-management of the period, in

which the actors all stand in a row facing the audience preserved, but the old stilted diction of former days seems to be considered too sacred to be tampered with. The result is a sense of weariness and constraint to the audiences in spite of the most perfect acting.

Another cause for the outcry against "manners" as represented on the English stage arises from the fact, that the critics who raise the lamentation make it a rule to attend the first representations of all new plays, when the general acting is not in a fit condition to be judged. In consequence of the lamentably deficient manner in which rehearsals are conducted on the English stage, with the exception of a few theatres, no performance can be fairly criticised on a first night. At the scanty rehearsals, the surroundings of the actor are wholly different from what they are on the night of the performance. His eyes meet nothing but one little line of gas, elevated above the foot-lights, under which are seated the prompter, the stage-manager, the author, and the "star" members of the company. There is no scenery, no furniture (at least not that to be used at the performance), no carpets, no floor-cloth, up to the last minute no "properties." When the actor walks on the stage at night, he treads on unaccustomed carpet, he finds strange chairs and tables and sofas, whilst everything else to which his eyes have been accustomed is removed. No wonder then that a strange feeling comes over him and greatly impedes his efforts! He appears uncomfortably nervous, and the consequence is that he acts without that polish and ease of manner which he might have exhibited had the rehearsals been properly conducted.

In the Parisian theatres, the rehearsals are far differently managed and are far more numerous, so that a great pitch of perfection is arrived at before the curtain rises on a first night. The stage-manager, as a rule, is a man of considerable invention, who has bestowed all his intelligence in the study of his peculiar craft. For many rehearsals, the gas is lighted as for the eventual representation. The prompter's table, with all its surroundings, is not there. The scenery is all set. The furniture is in its place. Each rehearsal, thus conducted, is a careful training for the ordeal the actor will have to go through before a critical public. Under these more favourable circumstances the artist can appear at his ease; all his movements have been carefully studied and settled, and his "manners" have had time to acquire that polish to attain which the English actor has not had the due opportunity.

In spite of these disadvantages, there can be no doubt that "manners on the stage" have greatly improved in latter years, that they are always improving under the better auspices which have been brought to bear; and, with the better material at the disposition of histrionic art, the time seems not far distant when "manners on the stage" may be considered unexceptionable.

THE DRAMATIC RING.

BY SYDNEY GRUNDY.

IS the stage as approachable to new writers as in the interest of dramatic art it ought to be? inquires a writer in the November number of *The Theatre*. "I put the suggestion in this form to avoid appearing dogmatic."

I am very much afraid that little will be done towards breaking through the iron Ring which at the present moment holds the drama in its grip, by any writer who is afraid of appearing dogmatic. Truth requires plain words, and the reformer who is to effect any change in the existing condition of the English stage must not only not be afraid of appearing dogmatic, but must be prepared to bear the ridicule and insult which have ever been the portion of reformers. For the last twenty years new writers for the stage have been putting the suggestion that their works are treated with contumely in all sorts of feeble and tentative ways, in order to avoid appearing dogmatic, and the result is what we see—the almost absolute extinction of English dramatic authorship. Modesty is a very excellent thing in its way, but there is a time to be modest and a time not to be modest. The present is a time not to be modest. Some years ago, Mr. Byron insisted, with more warmth than he is accustomed to exhibit, that it was the greatest nonsense in the world to talk about a dramatic Ring ; that no such thing existed, that it was simply the chimera of the unsuccessful. Everything that Mr. Byron says upon a theatrical subject is entitled to the most respectful consideration ; and in the sense that there is no organized opposition to the representation of new authors, undoubtedly he is right in his assertion. But there is a dramatic Ring for all that—a ring set round with spikes—which has its centre in the cowardice of English managers, and which is none the less effectual although not organized. If it were possible to go into the private history of those who now monopolise the theatre, I think it would be found that very few of them had been admitted to the sacred circle entirely upon their merits and from the outside ; but most even of them have had to work their way up through a long and arduous apprenticeship at farces and burlesques, and it must not be supposed that anybody grudges them the position to which they have attained. The contention that they are not entitled to the monopoly which they enjoy is perfectly consistent with the utmost personal goodwill towards one and all of them. We may sincerely congratulate our friend Thompson upon his appointment to that snug berth in the red-tape and sealing-wax office, and yet be of opinion that red-tape and sealing-wax are out of date, and that Thompson's appointment is a flagrant and scandalous job.

This cry that the stage is the monopoly of a favoured few, is an old cry. From time to time it has attained to such a pitch that some manager, a little more sensitive than the rest, has come forward with an explanation. The explanation has always been the same—namely, that not a single manuscript amongst the piles with which his room is choked is worth production. This assertion being one which it is impossible to contradict without appearing dogmatic, the abashed aspirants have slunk back into silence amidst the jeers of the beholders. But all the time the assertion was false. Let us go a little into detail, and its untruth will be apparent.

No manuscripts were more familiar to the managers than those of Mr. Robertson. No play was ever bandied about more than that *Society* which made the fortune of the Prince of Wales's Theatre. No dramatist ever had more difficulty in procuring a hearing than the author of *Caste*. When finally he obtained it—I believe through the perception and kind

offices of Mr. Byron—what was the result? What has almost invariably been the result, when in our time, by hook or crook, the work of a new author has been thrust before the public?—conspicuous success. Many years ago Mr. Vezin produced a play by Mr. Albery. Year after year elapsed, and nothing more was heard of Mr. Albery. Meanwhile, his plays were lying on the tables of the managers, amongst those piles of which “not one was worth production.” At last, he got his chance. What came of it? *Two Roses*. Are these exceptions? Nothing of the sort. I don’t know how long Mr. Merivale has been before the managers; but I do know that it is a long time since *All for Her* achieved an exceptional success under most unfavourable auspices. Mr. Merivale was suffered to fade out, until he reappeared as almost a new author, in an off-season, and upon a hurried occasion. But he did reappear; and again, what was the result? A triumph. It is many a year since I first heard of Mr. Broughton. It is many a year since Mr. and Mrs. Kendal played a little piece of his upon their country tours. Since then no pieces have been more widely played or more popular in the country than several of his charming comediettas. Actors and actresses who have taken part in them have spoken to me of them repeatedly in terms amounting almost to affection. Yet Mr. Broughton’s manuscripts have lain neglected in the London theatres, “not worth production.” Miss Litton happened to think otherwise, and after much delay a comedy of his was brought out in an afternoon. Result: another triumph. The successes of new authors are becoming almost monotonous. Mr. Lee’s first production was, if I remember rightly, not successful, but contained good work, and augured not ill for the future. It has been years before he has been able to obtain another hearing. At last, the Vaudeville brings out a little comedy by Mr. Lee. Result: success. Some time ago an actor asked me whether I knew “a man named Jones.” That was his fun, of course. Upon inquiry Jones turned out to be an author, who, he thought, “would do.” I have been looking out ever since for that man Jones. At last I find him at the Court. Result: exceptional success. How many years has Mr. Sims been amongst the list of authors “not worth production”? Is it from choice that he has been labouring away at journalism all his life, writing article after article, rhyme after rhyme, paragraph after paragraph, to be read to-day and forgotten to-morrow? Has he never helped to swell the pile upon the managerial desk? However long he waited, his chance came at last. Result: two hundred nights. It would require an effort to count up the weary years during which Mr. Meritt was condemned to write blood and thunder in the East, before he was allowed an audience in the West? When it was granted him, what was the consequence? A comedy one critic has pronounced the best since *The Two Roses*. And where has Mr. Godfrey been all this long time? Has he been silent of his own free-will? Has his pen been idle? Has he made no effort since *Queen Mab*? How long is it since Mr. and Mrs. Kendal first became acquainted with his merits? how often have they played *The Queen’s Shilling* in the country? Mr. Hare ultimately brings it out in town, and it at once takes its place as one of the genuine successes of the season.

The list is not exhausted. The brilliant triumph aehieved by the adaption of Messrs. Scott and Stephenson will be fresh in the memory of playgoers. Directly Mr. Val Prinsep is allowed to appear before the public as a dramatic author he hits the mark. Mr. Joseph Mackay has, upon several occasions, shown himself to be a competent playwright. There are not two opinions as to the infinite superiority of his version of *Les Trente Millions de Gladiator* over that recently produced by a conspicuous member of the Ring. Yet, whilst Mr. Mackay has never been permitted to give West-end playgoers another taste of his quality, no sooner does Mr. Burnand aehieve the greatest *fiasco* of recent years, than at the very theatre where he has failed so signally another play by him is instantly announced. The country critics are unanimous as to the excellence of a comedy by Messrs. Saville Clarke and Du Terreaux, yet it has never had the advantage of a regular production in town. And so I might continue. The history of new authors, in our time, is an almost uninterrupted history of triumph, and an absolute refutation of the managerial assertion that they are "not worth production."

It is pitiful to think of the years which these gentlemen have been compelled to waste, of the difficulties whieh have been deliberately placed in their path, and of the loss which playgoers have suffered by their involuntary silence. It may be urged, in eonsolation, that they have got out at last, and that their difficulties are now over. But, with perhaps one or two exceptions, their difficulties are not over. Judging by the past, we have no assurance that we shall again meet with the names of Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Broughton, Mr. Lee, or Mr. Jones, upon a London play-bill for the next five years. It is marvellous the way in which the London managers will let an author disappear. What has become of Mr. Coghlan as a dramatist? His *Lady Flora* was a pecuniary success, his *Quiet Rubber* was an admirable adaptation, and his *Brothers*, failure as it was, contained some of the most keen and brilliant satire in the modern drama. Most astounding disappearance of all, what has been allowed to become of Mr. Dubourg, the part-author of one of the greatest artistic and financial successes of the last ten years? He is reduced to the necessity of producing his last comedy at a special morning performance!

It may be urged that the long list of triumphs whieh I have enumerated is in itself a proof that the stage is not closed against new authors, and that there is no such thing as a Ring; but the inference is illusory. The authors I have specified have struggled painfully to the front and stormed the magic circle; but it is there all the same, and they are not in it. Some of the less experienced ones may think they are, but they will find out their mistake. They are only sitting on the spikes. The spikes will revolve, and down they will go. Their neat construction, their careful characterization, their bright dialogue, will vanish from the scene; and in their place will probably be announced, with much braying of trumpets, and produced with every advantage of careful rehearsal and elaborate mounting, some fresh pantomime by the author of *Unlimited Cash*.

The outlook is indeed dreary, but it is not without its brighter side. Miss Litton has ever shown herself a manager of real enter-

prise. She has ever been open to outside contributions, and there is some hope in the direction of Westminster. Mr. Bruce also, during his frequent managements, has been unremitting in his search after good work wherever it might be found, and there is a streak of light in the horizon in the direction of Soho. Of every other theatre which is not under the dominion of Paris the Ring has full possession, save of the St. James's. Here a higher quality of work is in demand than it is in the power of the Ring to supply. Mr. Hare, in the earlier years of his management of the Court, did his full share towards the encouragement of a new race of writers, and in the partnership which he has entered into lies fresh hope. No man upon the stage has done more in the way of seeking for sound work, and, having found it, setting it before the public, than has Mr. Kendal. Five or six unknown writers he, in conjunction with his wife, has been the first to introduce to the public; and there is many a young author who, whatever chops and changes this weird world may bring, will ever look back to him gratefully for his first recognition and assistance. He has such authors to his hand as Mr. Dubourg, Mr. Godfrey, and Mr. Broughton—all, I believe, his godchildren; it remains to be seen whether he will avail himself of his own discoveries, or whether he will helplessly fall back on Paris and the Ring.

The cry that English dramatic authorship is dead ought to be, rather, that English dramatic authorship has been murdered. But the murderers—I mean the managers—have only half succeeded in their efforts. There is plenty of material about which only needs experience to mould it. The pressing requirement of the stage is not authors—there are plenty; it is not a State-aided theatre, to become a centre of jobbery and corruption; it is not a school for actors—never were so many able actors as in the present day. A school of acting might possibly be a very excellent thing; it might possibly be a very mischievous thing, and turn its pupils out like peas out of a pod. Whatever it might prove, it is not the pressing requirement of the theatre. The pressing requirement of the theatre is a manager who has the courage to avail himself of the wealth of dramatic genius which lies outside the Ring.

“WILLIE DIXON.”

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

THE writer of a tenderly regretful obituary notice of William Jerrold Dixon in the *Athenæum* quotes one of Lord Lytton’s best novels, to the effect that a man never achieves greatness whose friends habitually call him Willie after he has attained the age of thirty years. Upon this he says of the subject of his otherwise eminently appreciative and always charming *in memoriam*, “the kindly and generous fellow, who had everybody’s good word, and a good word for everybody, lived to his thirty-second year, but to the last he was Willie.”

Precedents were not more important in the mythical days of Shylock of Venice than they are in these real days of England; for which reason I am

unwilling to let this dictum of my friend in the *Athenæum* pass unchallenged. I presume Lord Lytton's criticism would apply to the abbreviating or softening of any Christian name, so as to bring it within the lines of "undue familiarity." It might not, perhaps, extend to a nickname, or what might be regarded as a degeneration of the surname into a clipped patronymic; or in that case there are many famous instances of this "familiarity" not "breeding contempt," but signifying admiration and confidence. The *Athenæum* implies that the calling of a man by a familiar, informal name, which may indicate a sort of friendly endearment or good comradeship, is brought about by an amiable weakness of character, which is opposed to energy, and "push," and power. Shakspere's friends called him "Will." It is quite possible they may have called him "Willie." It is a fact that they wrote him down "Sweet Will Shakspere" after his death, which, according to the Lytton fancy, should have strangely discounted the robustness of his character. But history past and present is against the notion of a familiar abbreviation of a man's baptismal title, or a friendly burlesque of his surname, being necessarily associated with weakness of character on the part of the person so marked down for pleasant remembrance. Lord Palmerston was a strong man, but his greatest admirers called him "Pam." To this day Lord Beaconsfield's most constant supporters call him "Dizzy"—not to his face—we can hardly realize such a height of audacity as that; but George Stephenson was called "Geordie" by his friends long after he had revolutionized the world of locomotion. President Lincoln was invariably called "Abe." Hume was known as "Joe" and "Joey." Goldsmith was "Goldie"; and Hood was "Tom," though he had been christened Thomas. Long after "the Pen of the War" was thirty his intimates called him "Billy," and he is known to this day in press circles as "Billy Russell." The late Lord of that name was generally spoken of in political circles as "Johnnie," and often with the prefix "little." Garrick's intimates called him "Davey." The British army is full of "Charlies" and "Willies" and "Jemmies;" and of such were the heroes of Isandula, Rorke's Drift, and Ekowe.

So we, who knew him, called him "Willie," and we refuse to think we thereby influenced his destiny, or that the endearing term was connected with his slow development to fame. Some men make their mark early, some late. Willie Dixon had a wide and varied knowledge of London life. He was well read, a student of character, and with a certain independence of thought. Willie, it is true, disappointed us because he did not do great things. His square forehead, his strong jaw, and firm mouth seemed to promise something more than literary trifling; but we none of us made allowance for a young, vigorous life attacked in its opening by a depressing disease. When first I met Dixon some nine years ago he was a martyr to rheumatism, hobbling about on crutches. For three years he was an invalid. During six years he was subject to severe attacks. When he died he was lame from a chronic affection of the knee. This was the bitter legacy of the ice accident in Regent's Park. He saved the lives of several persons, presumed on his youth and strength, took no care for himself, and three years of illness just as he was entering life

blasted his immediate prospects and retarded his career. I say retarded advisedly ; for there can be no doubt, had he lived, Willie would in some way have fulfilled the hopes of his friends, and proved himself worthy of his name and his father's literary reputation.

Willie Dixon was known and liked in a wide artistic circle. A familiar figure in what I choose to call Upper Bohemia, he was always charged with the latest *bon mot*, the last bit of gossip, the newest book. He talked well, and his knowledge of the leaders in artistic life made his talk amusing. No young fellow ever spoke more warmly of the people he liked, and his admiration for the works of his intimate friends was genuine and freely expressed. Gilbert was his ideal dramatist, and he thought Julian Hawthorne the greatest novelist of his age, which the kindly fellow would qualify in my presence with an opinion about a certain "Valley of Poppies," which he never forgot to remember. His loyalty to his friends was a delightful trait in his character, and his greatest enjoyment in life was to sit down and talk with them or about them. A well-known dramatist confessed to me the other day that his greatest happiness is in conversing "with fellows he likes," and that was Willie's chief pleasure. I recall many memorable evenings and notable gatherings in which his beaming face shines out now, a pleasant human picture to look back upon. If we had only known how short a time he had to stay among us, how much more we should have made of him !

His chief ambition was to write a play. What a Will-o'-the-wisp is that same fatal desire to become a playwright ! Yet surely there is no more harassing, not to say unsatisfactory, occupation under the sun ; nor, for young and untried men, no profession or business that, in its first stages, is attended with more humiliating snubs and difficulties. Willie was the author of a sparkling little comedietta called *Married Another*, and his version of Molière's *Le Médecin malgré Lui*, produced at the Globe, had much merit in it, from a purely dramatic point of view. He was the joint author, with Mr. Julian Hawthorne, of an unacted comedy. *Belgravia* and *The Theatre* contain several of his short stories, some of which have had more than the ephemeral existence allowed to novelettes in England, one of them being now, I believe, in course of dramatization. The Christmas number of *London Society* contains some of his best work in miscellaneous literature, the first shots of the skirmisher getting his hand in for the battle to come.

Alas for poor Willie, he was wounded in what may be called an affair of outposts. When the pressure of the campaign came, it found him maimed. Just as he was shouldering his musket in earnest, he fell a victim to the lean warrior before whom conquerors and conquered go down at last. If he had lived long enough to do great things, he would have had enemies who would *not* have called him *Willie* ; for success is a crime in the eyes of many. He has left behind him only friends ; and they mourn his loss with a real and unaffected sorrow.

Portraits.

XXXIV.—MR. WILLIAM RIGNOLD.

IT would not be wide of the truth to say that Mr. Rignold has spent the whole of his life upon the stage. In his fourth year he danced a horn-pipe at a theatre in Redditch, the orchestra on that occasion being led by Mr. Alfred Mellon. The very precocious youth, who was born at Leicester about forty years ago, soon afterwards went to Newcastle, where he sang both on the stage and in the choir of St. Andrew's Church. Having displayed much promise in this capacity, he was specially educated for the musical profession, and on approaching man's estate was engaged to appear in operatic pieces at Limerick. It not unfrequently happened that in addition to discharging this duty he would conduct the orchestra between the acts! He next passed three years in Liverpool as an actor in the drama proper, at first in a very subordinate capacity, but towards the end of the period in first "heavy" and "character" parts. Migrating southwards, he acted at Bath and Bristol for some time as chief comedian and walking gentleman, and then, in conjunction with his brother, Mr. George Rignold, appeared at Swansea. In connection with this part of his career some amusing anecdotes are related. The brothers very closely resembled each other in both voice and appearance, and accordingly found no difficulty in exchanging parts as their convenience dictated. Mr. Rignold's chief employment was in the orchestra, but in the event of Mr. George not wishing to play a particular part he might have been seen to dart under the stage as soon as the music was finished, throw off a cloak which had concealed a stage dress, and appear before the audience in place of his brother. For some time the manager was unaware of these proceedings, but a little *contretemps* served to enlighten him upon the point, and calling the brothers into his room, he seriously asked them—for he could not tell himself—"which was which?" One evening Mr. George Rignold was announced to play Richard III. He knew nothing of the tent scene, and his brother, by the light of a candle in the wings, read the part aloud as the usurper writhed upon the couch. The reader had scarcely begun, however, when Mr. Coghlan, who was a member of the company, crept up and blew out the light, and therewith the scene had to come to an end! The Swansea engagement concluded, Mr. Rignold went to Dublin, where he played important characters for four years. The high reputation he gained in the Irish capital attracted the notice of Mr. Vining, who engaged him to play at the Princess's Theatre, London. He appeared there for the first time in a play rearranged by Mr. Boucicault for Mdlle. Beatrice, *Marie Antoinette*. That was in 1864, and since then Mr. Rignold has favourably distinguished himself as an earnest and vigorous actor of well-defined characters. His Jacques in the *Two Orphans* will not soon be forgotten, but at no time has he appeared to better advantage than he does as Goujet in *Drink*. As yet, however, he has not had the opportunities he deserves.



THE THEATRE, NO. 17, NEW SERIES

WOODBURYTYPE.

Dear Faubel
W. R. Reynolds

Fenilton.

A LUCKY SPECULATION.

BY R. HALKETT LORD.

A BLACK nor'easter was working its wicked will in the harbour of Alexander—the capital town of one of our colonies—as we steamed into it on board the *Omeo* in June, 1874. Blinding rain poured pitilessly down. The whole of the magnificent sheet of water which forms the land-locked harbour was a seething mass of foam, and as we rounded the inner heads the roar of the surf on the Eritonga beach, which faces the entrance to the harbour, was ominously distinct. Under the skilful guidance of our skipper, Jock Maclean, familiarly known on the coast as Hell-fire Jock, we felt our way to the pier. I had been spending a long holiday in sight-seeing. What between Rotomahana and the Hot Lakes, Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart Town, when I landed on the pier at Alexander I possessed three portmanteaus and seven shillings. However, I chartered a buggy and drove with all the confidence in the world—there is great virtue in portmanteaus—to the Empire Hotel, the Claridge's of Alexander.

Having done justice to an excellent dinner, I determined to hunt up an old press comrade, Frank Gifford, who, I had heard, was the editor of the *Alexander Daily Post*. The rain was coming down with tropical vengeance, and from all the numerous hills upon which the "Empire City," as they call it, is situated, miniature torrents of water poured down and inundated the Te Aro flat, the business portion of the town. It was an uninviting night, but the stimulus of an empty pocket overcame my repugnance to quit the cheerful halls of host Moeller. Luckily the offices of the *Post* were close handy, so I was not quite drowned by the time I was shaking Gifford by the hand.

He welcomed my advent in a reassuring manner, which eased my mind somewhat as to the inevitable *mauvais quart d'heure*. We had the usual shop talk. Fisher, of the *Gulgong Advertiser*, had died in a fit of *delirium tremens*; Clarke, of the *Argus*, had been dismissed for sending in a glowing criticism of a theatrical performance which had not taken place; Holloway of the *Waialato Times*, was editing the *Tauranga Trumpet*; Dillon had ratted and now swore by Bogel, the premier of the day; Jock Danderson had abandoned journalism and was keeping a public-house; and so forth. Then Master Frank dilated upon his own prospects. He had but two complaints to make; firstly, his proprietor was an old brute; secondly, his sub-editor was a young fool. My experience is that most newspaper proprietors are old brutes, and that most sub-editors are—not so wise as they would be thought. "Sub-editor!" said Frank. "He's excellent at the 'devouring element,' admirable at 'casting a gloom over the entire community,' and altogether unapproachable when he has to record the fact that 'our esteemed and enterprising fellow-

townsmen, Staines and Kircaldie, have added to their emporium a new shop-front, which is a credit to the town and quite an ornament to Te Aro Street ; but as to sub-editing, he knows as much about it as Mount Cook does of a policeman."

Sympathising deeply with my friend—for I, too, had had bitter experience of paste-and-scissor-men—I suggested that, perhaps, on the whole it wouldn't be amiss if Mr. Moseley were sent about his business and I were installed in his chair. Frank jumped at the idea, but explained that the "Old Brute" had an absurd Quixotic belief in Moseley because that eminent paste-pottist, though not a genius, was always sober.

A deep plot was then concocted, whereby the Old Brute was to be got round and Moseley circumvented. As a part of this plan it was arranged that I should attend a performance to be given that evening at the Odd-fellows' Hall, by Professor Beda, who described himself as the Premier Equilibrist Tight-rope Walker of the World, and Champion Prestidigitateur of the Universe. I was to return to the office and write as excellent an account as I could. "You'll have, in fact," said Frank, "to 'fake' it." And I did.

The rain was still pelting down as I struggled to the Hall. The roads were in places two feet deep in water. What with the wind, the rain, and the darkness of the streets—there was no gas in Alexander in those days—I had considerable difficulty in getting to the place at all, but at last I reached it, presented my ticket to an attendant who glared at me as savagely as a baulked box-keeper, and entered the room. The place was well-lighted, warm, and comfortable, and was a pleasing contrast to the horrors of the night outside. A dejected-looking pianist was playing a lively tune, and all things were ready for the feast. All things but one. The audience. There wasn't a soul in the place but myself,—and I was a dead-head. Seeing that it was now half-past eight and that the performance should have commenced at eight, this did not look promising. However, my business was to report the show, so down I sat and read the programme through half-a-dozen times, dimly conscious the while that the piano was informing me that "There was a good time comin', boys, only wait a little longer." What with the music and the lulling effect of the rain-drops pattering with monotonous regularity on the shingled roof, I fell asleep, and awoke to find the dejected pianist thundering out, "There is nae luck about the house, there is nae luck at all." I looked at my watch. Five minutes to nine, and I was still the oldest inhabitant. There was to be nae luck that night—that was certain. The pianist disappeared behind the curtain. I sat stolidly on. I was there to report that show and report it I was determined to—whatever happened. Everything happens to him who waits.

This happened to me. Professor Beda, in a shabby suit of evening clothes looking as though they were suffering from a long course of being let out on hire, came before the curtain, and addressing the audience, said, "Sir." The novelty of the exordium aroused my attention, and looking at the Professor closely, I recognised him. Professor Beda, the Premier Tight-rope Dancer of the World, and Champion Prestidigitateur of the Universe, was no other than

Harry Becker, who had been a private in my company of Forest Rangers during the war. "Sir," said he, "I am sorry to see so small an attendance here this evening. However, it is my boast that I never disappoint the public, and though I am afraid the proceeds of the evening's entertainment will barely pay expenses, nevertheless, with your kind permission, the performance will now proceed."

And it did proceed. As gravely and cheerily as though the hall had been crammed to suffocation, the Professor went through his entertainment. He borrowed my watch and pounded it in a mortar; he begged the loan of a half-crown—it was all I had in the world, but I trusted him with it; he spirited my pocket hankerchief into the centre of a candle, and performed a number of other tricks with ease and dexterity. All his little jokes and funniments, all the antics of his assistant, "Sprightly," he was called in the programme, were punctually gone through, and a very fair show it was—for the Colonies. When he came to, "This concludes the first portion of the entertainment, there will now be an intermission of ten minutes,"—I could stand it no longer. The melancholy pianist was announced to sing a comic song, which, perhaps, precipitated my decision. I asked him to tell Professor Beda that the audience would be glad to speak to him for a minute or two. I "went round."

"I am glad to see you, sir," said the Professor; "pray be seated; may I offer you a little whiskey and water?"

He might.

"You are a gentleman of the press, sir, I understand?"

Yes. I represented the *Post* and was there to do his show.

"I thought, sir, I would give you a specimen of what I can do, and if you'd like it I am quite prepared to go through the whole entertainment."

I explained that there was no occasion for that, because I could write about it quite as well without seeing it—perhaps better. If "gentlemen of the press" were to confine themselves to what they see, the business would soon go to the dogs.

We had some whisky and water and the Professor began to talk less formally.

"Well, sir, they told me, down South, Alexander was one of the best pitches in the profession. It don't look much like it. Seems to me about the one-horsedest place ever I was in. Except Naipaw, and that ain't even a one-donkey place. Not a soul in the house but you, sir, and this here blessed show has cost me out of pocket five pound ten. Paid in advance, too. A couple o' pound for the hall and the lights; a pound for the pianner; a couple o' pound for fixing up the rope; and ten bob for a money-taker. Think of that, sir. Ain't it hard? Ain't it cruel? Ten bob for a money-taker!"

That did seem hard indeed; but I explained that I thought that shows usually took especial care to have a money-taker of their own, for obvious reasons.

"So they do, sir, and so do I. My wife takes the money always; always has done ever since I took to the business, but my luck's dead out. She's up at Britten's—you know, sir, the hotel—in bed with a smashed

foot. Some clumsy fool on the ‘Star of the South,’ as we were coming here from the south, lets a great packing-case right on her foot and smashes her. The doctor says she’ll be a fortnight or better. Ten bob for a money-taker ; if it ain’t the cruellest thing as ever I hear ! And then the rain. Did anybody ever see it rain like it ? It’s been a coming down, down, down, like this for three blessed days. Not a soul in the house. Ten bob for a money-taker ! Help yourself, sir.”

I suggested that he might have better luck the next night, and corroborated the opinion he had heard down south that Alexander was an excellent place as a rule for performances of all kinds.

“ No, sir. The luck’s out, and I’m about broke, that’s what I am, and I ain’t got the money ; there’s the hall, they will have it in advance ; there’s the pianner, they wants that in advance ; and there’s the advertisements, not a line ’ll they give me till I’ve paid for to-day’s ads. ; not a line, not the *Post*, nor the *Independent*, nor none of ‘em. ‘Advance, New Zealand.’ That’s their motto, is it ? Pay in advance, it ought to be. Ten bob for a money-taker ! ”

Then a brilliant idea occurred to me. The Professor was stone broke, so was I. I knew what the Professor did not, apparently, that these black nor’ easters at Alexander never lasted more than three days. In all probability the next day would be bright and lovely, cold and sunshiny. If so, the sloppy roads would in a few hours be hard, firm, and dry, for the soil is limestone. I knew how prone the people of all conditions were to shows. The money for the hall and the “pianner” I could borrow from Gifford ; the ads. I could manage with a little persuasion, not unmixed with cheek ; and as to the money-taker, I’d be my own, so that that “ten bob” and mortification attaching thereto would be saved. Happy thought ! I’d risk it.

“ Professor Beda,” said I, “ otherwise Harry Becker ”—he gave a start—“ yes, you were in my company of the Forest Rangers. I’ve grown a beard since, and altered a good deal, no doubt. Now, Professor, I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll pay for the hall, and the ‘pianner,’ and the ads. to-morrow. You do your entertainment. I’ll take the money, and after ten pounds we’ll share the receipts.”

“ I should never have known you, sir, with that beard. The old Forest Rangers ! Do you remember Capt. Ross being shot alongside me and you, sir, at Waiapu ? How he did bleed ! I should never have known you, sir. Well, sir, I’ll tell you what it is, it ain’t no risk to me, and I’ll do it. I can’t be no worse off than I am. How I’m to leave the town and pay the hotel and the doctor, and passage-money on to Tauranga, blessed if I know. I’ll do it, sir. Shake hands on it. It’s a bargain. Me and you divides after ten pound.”

We cemented that arrangement with another whisky, and away I posted to the office of the *Post*. The venture looked unpromising enough. The rain was still sluicing down with purposeful pertinacity. I half repented of my bargain. But the bond was as binding as though it had been signed, sealed, and delivered, and witnessed by all the attorneys on the rolls. So I sloshed my way to the office of the *Post* knee-deep in mud and water.

The "Old Brute" had not turned up, and was, in fact, on one of his "bursts," as certain fits of temporary aberration are called in the colony. I propounded the matter to Gifford. He was more cautious than to me appeared good. But I wooed him with my golden tongue, not only out of the harmless necessary fiver, but out of a letter to the other papers guaranteeing the money for the next day's ads.

"How about the show?" said Gifford. "Magnificent! you wait and see what I write about it when I return." And away I went to the *Independent* and the *Herald*, polished up the Professor's ads., and as no report had been done at either place, I wrote as puffing a paragraph as I thought they would stand for each paper, and then hurried back to the *Post* to concoct as flaming an account as I could contrive; and I think I may say that it was strong; I may even venture to go further, and to say that it was about as glowing as such notices can be made. Repeated applications to Roget's *Thesaurus* were necessary. Gifford, who was reading my slips as I finished them, objected once or twice. "Come, I say, this is too hot. The old man 'll have a fit." The old man was the "Old Brute."

"Well, from what you tell me," I replied, "he's likely to have one anyhow, so it won't matter." Had the Professor been Houdin, Heller, the Wizard of the North, and Herr Frikell combined, I couldn't have been more lavish of my admiration.

It is usual to conclude this kind of article with some notice of the audience present, and here, for a minute or two, I was fairly nonplussed. But the old story occurred to me of the audience of one at the Portsmouth Theatre. The performance was proceeding merrily when the manager missed the audience; hurrying to the front, he asked, anxiously, "Where, where is the audience?" "Sir," said the box-keeper, "he has gone to get some beer, but he is delighted with the performance, and says he'll be back in a minute." "Let business proceed," said the manager. And it did proceed. Why, I do not know, but this story suggested to me a way out of the difficulty I was in. I concluded with the following peroration: "Altogether, Professor Beda's entertainment is one of the most admirable and entertaining that has ever visited Alexander or the colonies. At its conclusion, the entire audience rose as one man and applauded the professor to the echo." It must indeed have been "to the echo."

Gifford was nervous about the article, but, as I pointed out to him, no one could possibly contradict a word that I had written, and ultimately my notice, which extended over a column and a quarter, was allowed to pass *holus bolus*.

The rain had ceased when I returned, at three in the morning, to the hotel. Half-a-dozen times before daybreak I was out of bed inspecting the weather. No rain, the clouds had cleared off, and at five o'clock the stars were shining. A cold bright morning succeeded. At breakfast I heard people asking, "Were you at the Hall last night?" "No; were you?" "No." At luncheon the Mayor of the city said, "It's an odd thing, I've asked every one I've seen to-day about that performance at the Oddfellows' Hall, and not a soul seems to have been there," and I inwardly thanked Mr.

Mayor for an excellent advertisement. The Professor and the other persons concerned held their tongues. I had to make it worth their while to do so. "Ten bob for a money-taker," developed into a promise of a sovereign if the show paid.

And pay it did. The seat-plan at Lyon's the booksellers was well spotted with names by five o'clock. It was an off-day at the House of Representatives, it was the height of the Alexander season, and the evening turned out one of those brilliant, cold, starlight nights that New Zealand alone can produce. The doors were opened at half-past seven, and I ensconced myself, wearing a pair of green spectacles, in the pay-place. The melancholy musician struck up a lively tune, and at seventeen minutes to eight, the first shilling, for a back seat, came in. I have it now. Luckily, shillings and half-crowns came in plentifully at first, for had any one tendered a sovereign and wanted change, I should have been considerably embarrassed. By-and-by the front seats, five shillings, began to pour in, and up to a quarter past eight I was taking money as fast as I could receive it.

The show was a great success—to us. What the audience thought of it I don't know. I do know that the Professor and I divided fifty-three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence. The plot succeeded, the Old Brute was malleable, Moseley became "our reporter," and I was for two years sub-editor of the *Alexander Daily Post*.

PYGMALION AND GALATEA.

By J. R.

O H that story of the statue !
Statue, shaped with art so rare
That your sculptor gazing at you
Loved, in spite of the despair,
Till sweet Art took Nature's breath,
Lent you life and gave you death !

While he sigh'd, " Ah, fond beginner,
If, indeed, your hands wrought well,
Beauty should catch life within her,
Bird-like break its ivory shell !"
One more touch—her breast behold !
Tremulous in the garment's fold.

But while fear and rapture mingled,
And the swift surprise of seeing
How those shuddering pulses tingled
With the first faint flush of being,
Out he bursts with sudden cry,—
" She will change, grow old, and die !"

So to gain her was to lose her,
So to quicken was to kill :
Love sleeps heart-enshrined ; but, use her,
She will wake to perish still.
Yet would I—who would not ?—choose
So to gain and so to lose.

En Passant.

THE *Russkaya Staryna*, of St. Petersburg, is giving its readers some extracts from the Memoirs of the late Privy Councillor, Bagnolavski, from which an interesting anecdote may be taken. About forty years ago a play, called *Catherine II. et ses Favoris*, holding up the character of the Empress to ridicule and contempt, was brought out in Paris. The Emperor Nicholas immediately instructed the Russian Ambassador there to request that the performance should be stopped, and all copies of the play destroyed. "If," he added, "the king declines to accede to it, demand your passports and leave Paris within twenty-four hours." The Ambassador, Count Pahlen, was at table with the king when the despatch arrived. The message being described as pressing, he obtained leave to read it, and having done so passed it to the king. "But," said Louis Philippe, "I have no power to grant the request: I am a constitutional sovereign." "In that case," said the Ambassador, "my passports must be got ready." The king then referred the matter to his ministers, and a decree was issued by which the Czar gained his end without the susceptibilities of the people being aroused.

MADAME PATTI has never tried to make herself out as younger than she really is, and accordingly we shall not be suspected of a want of gallantry if we lay a translation of her baptismal certificate before our readers. It is as follows:—
 "Certificate of birth of Adèle-Jeanne-Marie Patti, born at Madrid, rue du Friendcaral, and baptized at the parish church of Saint-Louis, Register of baptisms no. 42, p. 153, verso. In the town of Madrid, district and province of the same name, April 8, 1843, I, don Joseph Losada, vicar of the parish of Saint-Louis, solemnly baptized a female child born at four o'clock of the afternoon of the 10 February of the present year, legitimate child of Mr. Salvator Patti, professor of music, born at Catania in Sicily, and of Mme. Catherine Chiesa, born at Rome, the paternal grand-parents being Mr. Peter Patti and Mme. Conception Marino, natives of Catania, and the maternal Mr. John Chiesa, born at Venice, and Mme. Louisa Carelli, born at Marino, in the Pontifical States. To the child were given the names Adèle-Jeanne-Marie."

LAST month we spoke of the consideration which Miss Heath enjoyed at Court some years ago. One day, we are told, the Queen gave her a book, and pointing to a poem on the open page, requested her to read it. Miss Heath, to her horror, discovered that it was one of those poems which are Mrs. Barrett Browning's speciality, the metre changing abruptly every few lines. The reader had never seen the poem before the book was placed in her hands by the Queen, and her trepidation was great at the thought of failing in the task. However, a good eye, a thorough training in elocution, and a quick perception of complicated phrasing, carried her through successfully. She breathed more freely when she had read the last line, naturally thinking that the poem had been selected by accident, and only hoping to be spared such trials in future. "There," exclaimed the Queen to the princesses, "I told you Miss Heath would be able to do it if anybody could."

MR. BLANCHARD informs us that there is some talk among the many enthusiastic admirers of Mr. Irving of reviving the Wolf Club, so famous in the early days of Edmund Kean. Those who are promoting the scheme had better reconsider their determination. The Wolf Club was simply a convivial meeting of

friends to the stage, who met at the Colc Hole Tavern in Fountain Court, Strand. Edmund Kean generally presided, and when he took the chair it was understood that no admiration of him as an actor should ever be expressed, and that no disparaging remark should be made in reference to any member of the theatrical profession. The club ceased to exist in 1816, but when, in the following year, Booth and Cobham failed to distinguish themselves in Kean's characters at Covent Garden, it was erroneously alleged that "the Wolves" had howled down both aspirants to the throne of tragedy, and that a bond of union existed among them to maintain Kean's supremacy against all comers. The resuscitation of the Wolf Club, however well-intended, would obviously lead to misapprehensions of a very serious kind, and the young gentlemen in the City who are drawing up their prospectus may be glad to be made acquainted with the brief history here supplied.

MR. BUCKSTONE died at Sydenham on the 31st of October, aged seventy-seven. Descended from an old Derbyshire family, he was originally intended for the navy and then for the law, but at the age of nineteen turned strolling player. Eventually, with the aid of Edmund Kean, he secured a footing in London, and for the next twenty-five years, in addition to acting at various theatres, produced most of the excellent melodramas and other plays which gave him so high a reputation. In 1853 he assumed the management of the Haymarket Theatre, which under his auspices became the principal home of English comedy. He remained there until 1877, when he virtually quitted the stage altogether. The most eventful period of his life is treated by Mr. Tom Taylor in another page. Mr. Buckstone, whose declining years were clouded by pecuniary misfortune, was twice married—first to Mrs. Fitzwilliam, to whom he addressed amatory sonnets when she was Fanny Copeland, the favourite of the Surrey and Sadler's Wells, and secondly to her cousin, Miss Bella Copeland, who survives him.

MR. BRENTANO, the retired bookseller and newsvendor of New York, was lately interviewed by a member of the staff of the *Musical Times* of that city. "Everybody famous or noted here," he said, "used to come to my shop to make purchases. Since 1853 I have known nearly every actor and actress. Mayor Oakey Hall was my largest customer before he went upon the stage. It was I who innocently revealed the secret of his departure for Europe by informing reporters that he bought English guide-books at my store just before he was missed. Mr. Augustin Daly I remember before his *Courier* days, when he was quite a lad. He worked then in a hardware store, and used to buy of me many story-papers. Now it is the foreign papers which he principally purchases. So does Mr. Boucicault, who will have every French book that is published. One day he said to me, 'Aha, Brentano, I have made a great fortune from one little book which I once bought of you. It was an Irish novel, and it inspired my *Colleen Bawn*. Forty cents I paid you for it—do you remember?—and I found it a better investment even than mining stocks.' Actors and actresses generally buy only papers that relate to their profession. A pleasant notice or kindly review will sell many papers. On the morning after a new piece or a new performance the persons concerned will buy some favourite papers for the notices; but few buy all of them, good or bad, friendly or hostile, as Mr. Forrest did. The fewest papers are bought by Mr. Edwin Booth and Mr. Lester Wallack. The latter is fond of English papers. Did anybody ever attempt to buy up all the copies of a paper to suppress it? Only once that I remember. It was Miss Kate Field, who did not like her portrait in the *Arcadian*, and tried to purchase every copy. Mr. Freund, chancing to hear of this, went on printing the *Arcadian* as fast as Miss Field could buy it, and for a time there was a race between them. He won, of course."

THE *Academy* announces the death of Peter Heise, the Danish composer, who

held a peculiar position in art as a link between poetry and music. Few musicians have studied verse forms and verse effects so carefully as Heise, and it is perhaps because he set his work so dutifully at the service of a sister art that his very delicate and original genius has failed to win recognition in countries where the lyrics of Oehlenschläger, Hertz, and Hauch are unknown. Born at Copenhagen in 1830, he underwent the customary training at the university, and in 1847 began to study the theory of music professionally. In addition to the opera of *Paschans Dotter*, he supplied the music to most of the poetical dramas brought out on the national Danish stage, particularly to Oehlenschläger's *Palnatoke*, Ibsen's *Kongsemnerne*, and Richardt's *Tornerose*. His great work, however, was the composition of songs.

MR. IRVING has much to reproach himself with. His genius has vitalized a play in which Cromwell is exhibited in an altogether unjustifiable light, and signs are not wanting that the old misapprehensions as to the character of the Protector are reviving. For example, there is a man in this big city who objects to having the name of his street changed to "Cromwell." "So long as I live," he writes to his landlord, "my family shall never inhabit a house in any street or terrace bearing the execrable name of 'Cromwell,' of most infamous memory—a rebel, a traitor, a regicide, a usurper, a self-seeking, ambitious hypocrite and tyrant."

FOND of a practical joke, Mr. Raymond, the American comedian, is as often the victim of this kind of pleasantry. For his farewell benefit at the Park Theatre he invited a number of his comrades from the Lotos Club to appear as jurors in *A Gilded Age*, promising them that their names should be suppressed. The full list of course was promptly furnished to the papers, and the lotos-eaters found themselves unexpectedly famous. But they had their revenge. The entire point of the final scene of the play depends upon the verdict of "Not Guilty," promptly rendered by the jury. But to the demand of the Court, Foreman Shaw solemnly answered "Guilty." There was a pause, dead silence, and then a roar of laughter from the audience. "Oh! foreman," gasped the actor, "they don't mean it—they mean just the other way." "Guilty!" repeated Foreman Shaw, grimly; and the action of the play stopped as completely as grandfather's clock. By this time Mr. Raymond had recovered his self-possession. He saw from the laughing eyes of the jury that it would be no use to poll it. "I move, your Honour, that the jury be allowed to retire for consultation!" he shouted; and then, in a passionate whisper, "let up, for Heaven's sake." The appeal of the practical joker was too humble to be refused, and the foreman gravely stated that he desired to change the verdict to "Not Guilty." Then came the hurrahs of the supernumeraries, the delight of Col. Sellers, the vindication of the heroine—and the curtain. Mr. Raymond will not soon forget the verdict of the Lotos jury.

MR. BULLEN, writing to the *Athenaeum*, points out that in the collection of MSS. at Lamport Hall, the seat of Sir Charles Isham, Bart., there is a remarkable news-letter, bearing the date of August, 1628, in which some particulars are given of the movements of the great favourite Buckingham just a short time before his assassination by Felton. The fact is recorded by his having been present at the Globe Theatre to see a performance of *Henry VIII*.—"On Teusday his Grace was p'sent at y^e acting of King Henry 8 at y^e Globe, a play bespoken of purpose by himselfe, w^rat he stayed till y^e Duke of Buckingham was beheaded & then departed. On Wenesday," we are also told, "his Grace was also spectator of y^e Rape of Lucrece at y^e Cocke-pitt." On another day there was "a play at y^e Globe of y^e downfall of y^e great Duke of Buckingham, w^runto y^e Savoian Ambassadour, y^e Duke, Earle of Hollânde & oth^{rs} came, yet stayed only y^e disgracing not y^e beheading of y^e great Duke of Buck." The *Rape of Lucrece* referred to, we may add, was Thomas Heywood's "true Roman tragedy," not printed until 1630.

THE *Daily News*, in criticising the revival of *The Merchant of Venice*, remarked that Hazlitt saw reason to reverse his first judgment of Edmund Kean's Shylock, and to this end adopted his "rather shabby device" of contradicting his criticism as if it had been written by somebody else. Few critics have so deep a knowledge of the history of the stage as has Mr. Moy Thomas, but in this case, we venture to think, he has come to a wrong conclusion. The first criticism appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1814, and the "recantation" in the *Examiner* two years afterwards. Both were reprinted in full by Mr. Hazlitt, in his *View of the English Stage*, published in 1818. If Hazlitt wished to disavow the first criticism, why did he, before quoting it, allow it to appear at the beginning of the volume? In the preface, moreover, he plainly states that that criticism came from his pen. "The first, and, as I think, the best, articles in this series," he says, "appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*. Many are those relating to Mr. Kean. I went to see him the first night of his appearing as Shylock. . . . I had been told to give as favourable an account as I could; I gave a true one." Having regard to all this, we can hardly subscribe to the opinion Mr. Thomas has expressed.

MR. BOUCICAULT'S Louis XI. has attracted much attention in New York; indeed, one critic goes so far as to pronounce it equal to Mr. Sothern's Othello. Mr. Clayton's Nemours, too, was deemed a weighty performance. "Shade of Brian Boroihme," says a spectator, "look at the size of him. 'Nomore' they call him in the bills, an' its lucky there was no more of him or they'd never have got him on the stage! He came in wid a snort, like the war-horse of Job, an' the planks laid down for the undulations of the surroundin' country trembled beneath his mighty fut. His face was got up to represent as much vengeance as wud scare the Ameer out of Cabul, an' he wore a cloak as big as Charity that covers a multitude of sins. 'Twas the cloak for his vengeance, beyond a doubt; for he never parted wid it through the piece, and there was a red cross on it that wud have decorated the new cathedral."

WE are credibly assured that after the performance the following dialogue was heard behind the scenes:—Mr. Boucicault (to Mr. John Brougham), "Phat d'ye mane be playin' Coitier wid a brogue?" Mr. Brougham (astonished), "Sure, 'tis an Irish drayma, yer honor. Ax Dominick Murray!" Mr. Dominick Murray (with a Michael Feeny bow), "The devil doubt yez, Brougham. 'Twas in ould Ireland I fust larned how to play ould Louey, and 'tis meself has acted the King moiyn's the night—bad cess to the omadhaun that tuck it from me." Miss Rose Coghlan (smiling), "Arrah, it's jokin' us, yez are, Mister Boucicault. Sure, don't we know it's Irish when yez wrote it yerself, more power to yez!" Mr. Boucicault (with royal dignity), "Be the toe of St. Patrick, is the hull of yez daft? 'Tis Louey the 'livinth of France I'm playin', ye spalpeens." Omnes (bowing), "An' it's yerself is the only actor, yer honor, that kin play it—that-a-way." Mr. Boucicault (molified), "True for yez! But, tare an' ages, phat Frenchman spake wid the brogue in 1483? Yer spilin' me play, bedad, an' violatin' ancient history." Clayton (with dignity), "Aw hobserve the Hirish hacent, guv'ner, in—aw—several of my —aw—finewst scwenes." Mr. Boucicault (cocking his eye keenly), "Well, well! May the devil fly away wid me if the Irish brogue be not as historically correct as the English accent, anyhow! Go along wid yez all! (Solus) 'Tis not in France we're playin', an' Louey an' his gang—Heaven rest their sowls!—would feel aisier at bein' turned into Paddies than Cockneys, ony day! (Musing) 'Twas a nate compliment to me, from the byes and gurls! Robert! (Enter Robert.) Ax the ladies and gentlemen of the company to be kind enough to take supper wid me, this night!"

A SACRED cantata, entitled *Queen Esther*, was lately given at Hoborn Hall, St.

Killiad, Texas. The announcement will take many by surprise, for down to the present time we have been led to suppose that that State was about the last in the world to welcome an entertainment of such a description. The morals of Texas, however, are higher than is usually supposed ; the law there forbids any man to carry more than six pistols at a time, and the *Boston Folio* avers that the magistrate lately fined a dead nigger for having a shot-gun concealed on his person. But the impressive effect of the cantata was marred by an unfortunate want of fortitude on the part of the representative of Ahasuerus. The moment he appeared some jeering remarks were addressed to him from the gallery. "See here," he said suddenly stopping, "this is a religious play, and decency has to be observed. This is the State of Texas, and we are going to have order if we've got to get it with the pistol. I'm playing Ahasuerus just now, but after the show I'll be Sam Turner again, and if any man wants to see me then," he added with terrible significance, "he can make his wants known."

MR. CHARLES G. ROSENBERG, who died some months ago, is not a figure that will soon drop out of memory. He was the son of Count de Rosenberg, one of the court painters to William IV., and in his youth was the musical critic of the *Morning Post*, a contributor to *Blackwood's*, and a noted fop and gallant. According to the *New York Spirit of the Times* he would go up to the composing-room of the *Post* and write his criticisms in white kid gloves. There was a ballet at Covent Garden in those days, and Rosenberg undertook to defend one of the leading dancers from a brutal relative. The husband of the dancer, instead of the usual proceedings, had the elegant critic arrested for stealing the clothes in which she had eloped. Rosenberg was cast into Newgate, and deserted by all his friends, except Mr. Boucicault. The Grand Jury refused to find a bill against the critic, who, however, felt the prison taint so sorely that he sought lethe and nepenthe on the Continent. He wrote correspondence for the *Post*, and articles for magazines ; dropped out of sight, and finally went to America to retrieve his fortunes. On the voyage he met the charming lady who is now his widow. In America, imagining no foreign aristocrat would be allowed to live, he cut the Count from off his name—a fatal mistake. Then (as now) the Americans loved a lord, and bowed down to a baron. The arrival of the Count de Rosenberg with his lovely bride, whom he had met so romantically upon the sea, would have made a great sensation. The arrival of Mr. and Mrs. C. Rosenberg was of no more importance than that of any other two immigrants. The Count de Rosenberg could have found immediate employment on any journal. Mr. Rosenberg wore out his shoes, spent all his money, and was glad to accept the position of Barnum's press-agent with Jenny Lind. So the ex-exquisite of London became a theatrical agent, and the ex-critic of the *Morning Post* earned his living by writing puffs, first of Jenny Lind, then of other artistic lions (including Barnum's whole menagerie), and finally of Edwin Forrest. He wrote plays also, but although some of them were sold, none of them were performed. His *Cromwell*, written for Forrest, and purchased by him, deserved representation at least. His large pictures, "The Bay of New York," and "Central Park," were engraved and chromo-lithographed, and ought to have made his fortune. He starved himself for years to pay taxes upon a piece of land in Pennsylvania, then sold it for a trifle, and heard that the purchaser had discovered an oil-well upon the property. He designed engravings for the illustrated papers, but his engagements always ended in a quarrel. A few months ago he came to say good-bye, and ask for letters of introduction to friends in London. A legacy had been left him, and he was going to claim it. "Them fellows that write" presented him with his ticket, and a purse for expenses, and he sailed away. The legacy amounted to about 1,000 dols. ; but whether he ever received it or not, there is no information. The probabilities are that he found it left to some other Rosenberg, who was already rich, and did not need the money. That would be "Rosenberg's luck."

At the Play.

—♦♦—
IN LONDON.

THE revival at the Lyceum of *The Merchant of Venice* deals another blow at the movement for establishing a national theatre. It is now more evident than ever that as far as the actual performance of plays is concerned private enterprise has accomplished what we were long tempted to believe was impossible without a subvention from the State. The need of a Conservatoire and of a system under which meritorious new plays may be produced, is as pressing as ever, but the promoters of the movement we have alluded to are now wholly unable to pretend that a theatre in which the poetic drama can be adequately presented has yet to be established. The revival of *The Merchant of Venice*, regarded from any point of view, is at least equal—and we are not speaking without the knowledge necessary to institute the comparison—to anything that has been done in the subsidized theatres of the Continent. Mr. Irving's Shylock and Miss Terry's Portia could hardly be surpassed; the performance, as a whole, is distinguished by an *ensemble* hitherto supposed to be unattainable beyond the precincts of the Théâtre Français, and the *mise-en-scène* is as perfect as that which has given the Meiningen company an international reputation. It is not without reluctance that we make these comparisons, but at a time when a strong tendency is shown to deprecate English in order to extol foreign histrionic art—when we are told on seemingly good authority that Shakspere cannot be played here with the general excellence achieved elsewhere—it is necessary, we think, to make the truth known. Nor is there any room for fear that the manager's enterprise will go unrewarded. If any doubt were entertained on this point it might be immediately dispelled by the obvious commercial success of the revival. Mr. Irving, in fact, has made Shakspere popular—an achievement of which but few of his predecessors on the stage could boast.

That Shylock will take a prominent place among the characters which Mr. Irving has assumed there can be no question. The impersonation is full of his best qualities as an actor—imagination, sympathy, independence of thought, and wealth of illustrative detail. Moreover, the part proves to be well within the range of his powers, which are always exercised to the best purpose in characters endowed with a distinct individuality. Not the least striking feature of the performance is its daring originality. Mr. Irving evidently believes that Shakspere intended to enlist our sympathies on the side of the Jew, and the conception is embodied in a manner altogether new to the stage. The fierceness associated with the character since Macklin appeared in it is not absent. Except in the scene with Tubal, where passion will out, the bearing of this Shylock is distinguished by a comparatively quiet and tranquil dignity—perhaps we ought rather to say the superb dig-

nity of the Arabian race. The whole force of an “old untainted religious aristocracy” is made manifest in his person. He feels and acts as one of a noble but long-oppressed nation, as a representative of Judaism against the apostate Galilean, as an instrument of vengeance in the hands of an offended God. In point of intelligence and culture he is far above the Christians with whom he comes into contact, and the fact that as a Jew he is deemed far below them in the social scale is gall and wormwood to his proud and sensitive spirit. He is not malignant by nature, but simply as a result of the wrongs heaped upon his tribe. He hates Antonio less for having brought down the rate of usance in Venice than for the indignities put upon him by the merchant. His sacred law does not permit him to forgive; he must have an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Exhibited in this light, not so much as a man grievously wronged in his own person as a representative of a great but oppressed tribe, Shylock acquires on the stage what Shakspere evidently intended to impart to the character—a sad and romantic interest, an almost tragic elevation and grace.

In Mr. Irving’s performance, as in the play, Shylock appears before us under three different aspects. First of all he is the usurer, then the outraged father, and finally the vengeful creditor. Mr. Irving’s appearance is in harmony with his view of the part. He comes forward as a man between fifty and sixty years of age, infirm enough to need the support of a stick, with an iron-gray wisp of beard, and wearing a sober brown gaberdine, an oriental shawl girdle, and a close-fitting black cap with a yellow line across it. The law of Venice, it may be remembered, required Jews living in that city to wear a red hat as a distinctive sign of their tribe, but in this instance an actor may well be pardoned for dispensing with historical accuracy. A picturesque background is at the outset provided for this striking figure by a view of the Palace of St. Mark, with a quay on which porters are landing bales of merchandise. Mr. Irving’s acting here is studiously quiet in tone, but full expression is given to the religious fervour of the Jew, the sense of wrong which rankles in his bosom, the undercurrent of sarcasm in his affected humility, and the cynical humour which breaks forth in “I will be assured I may” and other passages. It is as he utters the words—

Antonio shall become bound,—well?

that the idea of vengeance crosses his mind. In the scene where the loan is agreed upon we have a fine illustration of the text; the Jew touches Antonio on the heart, and, seeing the merchant recoil from him, apologises for his error by a bow in which we can perceive all the bitterness induced by the hard distinction drawn between Christian and Jew. The background of the scene of Jessica’s elopement is formed of Shylock’s house at night, with a bridge over the canal which flows by it, and with a votive lamp to the Virgin on the wall. There a barcarolle is sung by some Venetians on a gondola, and a number of masqueraders rush merrily past. The noise having subsided, the curtain drops, to be raised again a few moments afterwards—a pleasing innovation—to exhibit Shylock returning without any suspicion of Jessica’s treachery to his plundered and deserted home. The scene which follows the discovery of Jessica’s flight

is sustained by Mr. Irving with great power. Never, perhaps, have the conflicting passions which assail the mind of the Jew at this point been so vividly and justly expressed. His reason seems to reel under the heavy blow it has received, and the brief allusion to his dead wife is full of pathos and tenderness. The father is here more visible than the usurer; his anguish is due less to the loss of his ducats than to the fact that his own flesh and blood has rebelled against him. Then comes the fierce thirst for revenge which follows the news of Antonio's ill-fortune, and again does the actor rise equal to the requirements of the situation. By the time of the trial, however, the storm has subsided into a dead calm. Bidden to appear in the Duke's court—a fine mediæval chamber, with portraits of Venetian dignitaries of times gone by on the walls, and with a crowd of deeply-interested spectators, including Tubal and other Jews, at the back—he slowly and gravely comes in. The tone in which he replies to the appeals for mercy is even more significant than are his words. He stands there like a figure of Fate—pitiless, majestic, implacable. But his vindictiveness is of a nature which fascinates while it repels. He is rather the depositary of the vengeance of his race than animated by the remembrance of personal wrongs. The hour of vengeance has at length struck, and he will not be balked of his prey. There is no necessity for deference now; the law is on his side. His face wears a hard, set expression, relieved at long intervals by a glance of bitter hate towards Antonio or a faint smile of triumph. Nor is this superb calm less conspicuous when the cause turns against him. The scales drop from his hands, but that is all. For a time he seems to be turned to stone, to be as immovable as a statue. The Christian, as might have been expected, has again conquered; sufferance is indeed the badge of the Hebrew race. Eventually, crushed by the conditions on which his life is spared, he stalks with a heavy sigh from the Court, only stopping to cast a look of deep pity at the ribald youth who is barking like a cur at his heels. Nothing could have been finer and more impressive than this exit, which brought the performance to a conclusion worthy of what had gone before.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, as in *Hamlet*, Mr. Irving has the advantage of generally efficient support. The Portia of Miss Ellen Terry, as most of us know, is one of her brightest impersonations. Every time she appears on the stage as the lady of Belmont it seems as though one of the Venetian dames who sat to Paolo Veronese had returned to life, and in regard to her acting it may be said that she surpasses even what she did at the Prince of Wales's Theatre four or five years ago. Especially charming are her description to Nerissa of the lovers, the silent eloquence with which the alternations of hope and fear in the casket scenes are portrayed, the archness and delicacy manifested in her imitation of the style of the typical young lawyer, the earnest and musical delicacy of the speech on mercy, and last, but not least, the raillery scene in the fifth act. Miss Terry's Portia, unlike that of Shakspere, is more of the girl than the woman, but against this we have to set the fact that she appreciates and realizes the essentially ideal character of the casket story. Mr. Barnes, who plays Bassanio, obviously falls into the error of regarding that story as one of possibly real life; but it must be pointed out that, while missing the spirit

in which the part is conceived and drawn, he looks and speaks as a high-minded Venetian gentleman. The same praise must be awarded to the Lorenzo of Mr. Forbes, the Salanio of Mr. Elwood, and the Salarino of Mr. Pinero. The Gratiano of Mr. Cooper is not sufficiently light and airy; Mr. Johnson well preserves the humour of Launcelot, but it is to be wished that some alteration could be made of the time-honoured "business" associated with the part. Mr. Beaumont's excellent elocution does him good service as the Duke, and the Nerissa of Miss Florence Terry is a pleasingly unaffected performance. Regarded as a whole, this revival of *The Merchant of Venice* is more effective than even Mr. Irving has led us to expect of him—an eulogium which, high as it may be, is not undeserved.

THE contrast between Shakspere's two plays, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Henry V.* is scarcely greater than that between the spirit which animates Mr. Irving's revival and the apparent purpose of Mr. George Rignold's. Professor Gervinus professes to find the "whole interest" of the drama "in the development of the ethical character of the hero," and though few even of those with whom this play is a favourite will share in this view of it, most will probably consider that the "whole interest," wherever it may be, scarcely obtains recognition on the stage of Drury Lane. Here, whether the fault be that of the company engaged in the representation, or of the audience, supposed to be best pleased with realistic stage-combat, the general effect of the drama is connected as little as may be with any ethical considerations. The defects generally recognised in *Henry V.* when employed as a stage-play are more or less satisfactorily compensated for by the stage-carpentry of procession and tableau, whilst the chief actor contents himself with a view of the hero's character which has the useful merit of perfect intelligibility. Mr. George Rignold, if not quite so fine an actor as some of his American experiences may lead him to imagine, has a considerable amount of straightforward power. His presence is good, his utterance forcible, and his elocution effective, notwithstanding his odd habit of interpolating pauses so long that they make the nervous hearer uncomfortable for fear lest the services of the prompter should have to be called in. Mr. Rignold has moreover the art, a sufficiently rare one upon our stage to be worth note, of suggesting the heroic by his bearing, though he lacks the subtle instinct needed to indicate that *Henry V.*, even in his least dignified moments, was a king. The vigour, however, of the impersonation is quite sufficient to cause minor defects of style to be forgotten, especially by an audience which at Drury Lane looks principally for spectacular illustration of battle-fields, and listens for the ringing delivery of familiar passages of declamatory patriotism. The other *dramatis personæ*, all of whom are generally made upon our stage even more subordinate than they are in Shakspere's history, are on this occasion played neither better nor worse than usual. In Miss Vivian a new actress is found who is able to play Katherine of Valois not ungracefully; and if Mr. Odell is inclined to make Pistol somewhat too obtrusive, his quaint and dry humour is very welcome in the part. Perhaps, however, the most artistic assumption of character in the performance is given by Mr. Ryder as the sturdy soldier Williams. It should be added that in Miss Henderson the chorus, which has often been

omitted, is retained, although the successful illustration by the stirring scenes provided by the management renders the old device of doubtful necessity.

THE revival of *Ours* at the Prince of Wales's is welcome, both for itself and for the fact that it suitably rounds off Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's management of this theatre. The comedy has, however, been so recently seen here that it would at the present moment be superfluous to say more of the familiar impersonations of Mary Netley and Hugh Chaleot than that they have all their old natural charm, though some of their scenes are now elaborated to a dangerous excess. Mr. Arthur Cecil plays Prince Perovsky with all Mr. Hare's finish, though with less than his dramatic force; Mr. Kemble and Miss Le Thiere are the representatives of the Shendrys, and Mr. Conway is a capital MacAlister. Other excellent features of the new cast are the graceful Blanche Haye of Miss M. Terry, and the strong, yet delicate touches with which Mr. Forbes Robertson emphasizes the sketch of Serjeant Jones.

EXCEPT for the *début* on the London stage of a remarkably promising young actress as the heroine of *Just like a Woman*, there is little worthy of note in Mr. Dubourg's new comedy recently produced at a Gaiety matinée. Its story, or rather its pair of stories, is by no means well-fitted for stage illustration, at any rate in the form of comedy; its satire is of the cheap and conventional order, and its interest is of the slightest. Its scenes are alternately devoted to the ridicule of professional political agitators, or of ladies who ardently support the movement in favour of woman's rights, and to the development of the character of a young woman who has been driven to flirting because she is misunderstood. The one set of motives is but clumsily dovetailed with the other; but even if in this respect *Just like a Woman* were a better constructed work, it would still be marred by almost fatal defects. The electioneering business of the piece is conducted in a wholly preposterous and farcical fashion; and the nature of the heroine, intended as it is to be essentially womanly, is so drawn as to make it the reverse of sympathetic. That this should be so is a pity, for the burlesque of an electioneering agent's eccentricities is worked up into a very amusing scene, in which the presentation of an elaborate testimonial is balked by the determination of its manufacturer to get paid for it before it passes beyond his control; whilst, on the other hand, there are suggestions of genuine dramatic interest in the study of a reformed flirt's disposition. Mr. Dubourg has, however, not succeeded in turning his materials to good account; and the chief result of his work is to make us appraise more highly the share of his coadjutor in that excellent play, *New Men and Old Acres*. The new actress who here made her first London appearance is a Miss Measor, who only needs to have her obvious capabilities for comedy trained adequately to become a valuable artist. Miss Measor's good points are many, and she is full of vivacious individuality; her faults she might easily correct without losing any of her spontaneous brightness and force. For the rest the representation was of little interest, as though Mrs. Chippendale, Mr. Macklin, and Miss Willes were included in the cast, they did little to distinguish themselves; whilst Mr. Kelly and Mr. Kemble played very badly, the one because he walked listlessly through his part, the other because he over-acted it. The best performance

of the afternoon was that of Mr. Arthur Wood, as a tradesman anxious to get his money paid to him at an awkward moment.

MR. BURNAND has been very much more fortunate at the Gaiety in his burlesque of *Rob Roy* than in his version of the farcical comedy *Les Trente Millions de Gladiator*. During the long interval which has elapsed since the same author's *Ixion* was produced at the Royalty no better burlesque than *Robbing Roy, or Scotched and Kilt*, and very few so good, has been placed on the stage, and were it not for the exigencies of a Christmas season Mr. Burnand's new piece of drollery might fairly be expected to win the reward of a very long run indeed. It is unnecessary to note in detail how, while following the story as closely as may be, the burlesque makes genial fun of its chief incidents and characters, how the brave Highlander becomes a henpecked coward, very uncomfortable in his chilly attire, how Rashleigh Osbaldistone becomes a transpontine villain, and how a comic fight between him and the Dougal Creature brings down simultaneously the curtain and the house. All the principal players are well-suited with parts, Mr. Terry being peculiarly grotesque as the hero, Mr. Royce a Dougal who gives absurd accentuation to the eccentricities of that faithful follower, and Mr. Elton finding in Rashleigh an opportunity of making his first important mark on the London stage. Miss Kate Vaughan, though not very happy in her selection of a dress for Di Vernon, dances so gracefully as to disarm all criticisms directed to other phases of her performance, and Miss E. Farren gives with all necessary point a "topical" song, written, like other very sparkling ditties in the burlesque, by Mr. H. T. Stephens.

THE new comedy, *Light and Shade*, by Mr. F. W. Broughton, tentatively given at the Imperial Theatre's matinées, makes very pleasant use of very familiar materials. Played on a smaller stage, by a company as strong as that concerned in its presentation at the Imperial, *Light and Shade* would probably have secured a success more definite than any to which it can at present lay claim, for it is a bright and agreeable play, clearly written, and by no means deficient in useful dramatic qualities. Its story deals with the vicissitudes of a fascinating heroine's engagement to a man for whom she has no real love, but to whom she has bound herself in order to please her father. Under these circumstances, and just when her father's pecuniary obligations place him further in the power of her betrothed, of course Miss Clifford manages to fall in love, and with a young man whose position as private soldier makes him a decidedly ineligible suitor. What would happen if Mr. Paul Deveril did not opportunely turn out to be the rightful heir to his rival's estates we need not perhaps inquire; but it may suffice to indicate that he secures our sympathy so completely as to obviously preclude the practicability of his discomfiture, especially as the man whom he displaces is a lover quite unworthy of a heroine so charming as Miss Litton makes out of Miss Clifford. Several very pretty scenes, notably one in the second act, where she is discovered tracing Paul's name upon the sand, and another in which girlish indignation at supposed ill-treatment is amusingly treated, fall to the lot of Miss Litton, who never makes a mistake where womanly tact is required; and she is admirably seconded by Mr. Kyrle Bellew, who, as Paul, proves that he can flirt and make love as very few

English actors, and very few French ones, save M. Delaunay, ever succeed in doing. Winning alike in manner and appearance, and daily growing in artistic power, Mr. Bellew is a *jeune premier* who should before long take a very prominent position indeed. In a minor part, Mr. Lionel Brongh's lifelike naturalness was necessarily of the greatest value to the tone of the representation ; and Mr. Everill, Mr. Edgar, Mr. Bannister, and Miss F. Addison were also included in the cast with advantage.

WITH a couple of plays in which he has often appeared before, Mr. Toole has commenced in a most auspicious way his tenure of the Folly for the last few years of its existence as a theatre. The reception which the comedian received as Chawles in *A Fool and his Money* proved how warm is the welcome extended to him as a manager, and gave the best possible augury of his services in his new undertaking.

A COUPLE of isolated performances, both given as it chances at the *matinées* of the Adelphi, where *Nicholas Nickleby* has in the evenings taken the place of the wretched *Rescued*, deserve mention, though for widely different reasons. Miss Elaine Verner's first appearance on the stage in one of its most trying rôles—that of Juliet—probably means no more than that she or her advisers are ambitious, rather than discreet. She cannot imagine that lessons from any master, however ably given and carefully learnt, can enable her to run before she has practised walking, and she will be satisfied with the assurance that the natural gifts and general intelligence which she evinced under trying circumstances appear, so far as can be judged from an ill-advised experiment, adequate to the career on which she has embarked. The only intrinsically interesting elements of the performance were supplied by Mr. Harcourt's capital Mercutio and Mr. Fernandez's Friar Lawrence, an artistic study full of refined colour and force.

The other impersonation which deserves comment is the Sir Pertinax Macsycophant of Mr. J. R. Gibson, a Scotch actor of some reputation and of evident ability. His reading of the character, while differing widely from that of Mr. Phelps, and missing something of dramatic fire, is impressive in its verisimilitude. It is singularly consistent, perfect in detail, and thoroughly interesting from first to last. If *The Man of the World* were a more popular play nowadays, Mr. Gibson might by his artistic embodiment alone secure the warm appreciation of London playgoers.

IN THE PROVINCES.

ON the third of last month two new pieces were produced. One of these was played for the first time at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. *Bolivar; or Life for Love*, as the play is called, is from the pen of Mr. W. G. Wills, and has for its subject the adventures of the South American patriot. The play is written in Mr. Wills's best style, and, with Mr. Charles Dillon as the hero, met with a very favourable reception. Some of the passages are exceptionally good. The second play was produced at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester. It is a drama, in a prologue and three acts, called *Loved and Lost*, written by Mr. Joseph Hattou and Mr. Arthur Mathison, and founded upon episodes from Mrs. Burnett's latest novel, *Howarth; or*

the Man of the North. The plot arises from the hopeless love—a hopeless love for many reasons—which Howarth, a man with an unbending will, has conceived for his business partner's daughter. In saving the life of the girl whom he had so long loved he loses his own. Mr. Billington played the hero—a powerful physiological study—with great discrimination and vigour, winning warm encomiums, both from the press and the public. Miss Helen Barry, who recently had a most successful engagement of four weeks in Liverpool, is still on tour, as are also Miss Fowler, Miss Marriott, Mr. Barry Sullivan, and the *Caste, Proof, Les Cloches de Corneville, and Madame Favart* companies.

IN PARIS.

THE *Mariage de Figaro* has been revived at the Théâtre Français. It would be unnecessary at this time of day to enter into the history of this remarkable comedy—how it was proscribed in the first instance by Louis XVI., and how, thanks to the astuteness and indomitable energy of its author, it eventually found its way to the boards. Nor is it necessary to dilate upon its political significance and ask whether it precipitated the Great Revolution of 1789. As regards the distribution of the characters, this performance is far from satisfactory. Mdlle. Reichemberg, indeed, is charming as Cherubin; M. Delaunay is as graceful and easy as ever as Almaviva, and M. Thiron is irreproachable as Brid'oisin. On the other hand, Mdlle. Croizette was sombre und overdressed as Suzanne; M. Coquelin spoilt the effect of his Figaro by treating the monologue in the fifth act as pertaining to the domain of tragedy, and Mdlle. Broisat is evidently out of place as the Countess. Altogether, this revival is not one of which M. Perrin has much reason to be proud. A play dealing with the same period as *Figaro*, *Les Mirabeau*, by M. Claretie, has met with deserved success at the Théâtre des Nations. Framed with the object of introducing the members of that famous family, it brings into prominent but just relief the character of the illustrious orator, and is written with considerable eloquence, tact, and power. M. Paul Deshayes represents Mirabeau with good effect, but his make-up is little better than a gross caricature. M. Lecocq's new opera *La Jolie Persane*, has met with some success at the Renaissance, thanks in great measure to the charming impersonation of the heroine by Mdlle. Hading. The music is not novel, and is inferior to the libretto (by MM. Leterrier and Vanloo). The Chateau d' Eau has added to the list of its successes by *La P'tiote*, a piece in five acts, by M. Maurice Drak; but as much can hardly be said for the last production at the Folies Dramatiques, *Paques Fleuries*, a comic opera by M. Lacome. At the Bouffes-Parisiens we have a musical trifle by M. Edmond Audran, *Les Noces d'Olivette*, and at the Fantaisies Parisiencs an operetta called *Le Billet de Logement*, neither unworthy of a visit.

IN BERLIN.

THE only novelty produced at the Royal Playhouse during the past month was a drama in five acts by A. Hackenthal (who is said to be a young

lady), entitled *Eine Ehe von heut* (A Marriage of the Present Day). The suicide of the bad husband, to whom the heroine's parents had sacrificed her from pecuniary motives, forms the *dénouement* of the play, and was greeted with loud outbursts of mocking laughter which had frequently interrupted the course of the performance, and sealed the fate of the worst play produced at the leading theatre for many years. Herr Drach, formerly of the Vienna Stadt-Theater, has been appearing here with marked success in the title-characters in Karl Gutzkow's *Uriel Acosta* and Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, and is regarded as the most satisfactory representative of heroic parts that has been seen on this stage for many years. The Residenz Theater, after some not very happy efforts in another line, has reverted to modern French pieces, and has given a German version of the *Fils Naturel* of M. Dumas with success. Herr Ferdinand Dessoir gave a very amusing rendering of the notary Fressard. Fräulein Lacroix was very satisfactory as Claire Vignot, and the Marquis and Marquise and Sternay found excellent representatives in Herr Haack, Frau Ernst, and Herr Keppler respectively. The *jeune premier*, Herr Paul, on the other hand, was unsatisfactory. The Wallner Theater produced on the 18th October a new comedy by Herr Oscar Blumenthal, entitled *Wir Abgeordneten* (We members of Parliament), in which two of the leading characters are politicians who require much assistance in the preparation of their speeches. The piece excited much laughter on its first performance, but did not long prove attractive, and was succeeded on the 25th October by Herr Michael Klapp's *Rosenkranz und Güldenstern*, which the members of the Vienna Burgtheater had already introduced to Berlin last July. On the 1st November that piece in its turn gave place to Herr L'Arronge's *Wohlthätige Frauen*, recently produced at the Vienna Burgtheater.

IN VIENNA.

THE principal theatrical event of the past month was the restoration to the repertory of the Burgtheater of Shakspere's *King Lear*, which in the days of the great Anschütz was one of the glories of the Viennese stage. The character was first assumed by Anschütz in 1821, when he was only thirty-six years old, and it was with great hesitation that he consented to abandon the youthful heroic parts which he had hitherto played, and enter upon the line of old men. After profound study of the character, he appeared as King Lear, and achieved an immense success. Since the death of Anschütz, *King Lear* has practically disappeared from the repertory of the Burgtheater, such actors as Herren Wagner, Förster, and Lewinsky having essayed the title-part with faint success. The present revival is more promising. The tragedy is placed upon the stage with greater splendour than has before been thought requisite. Herr Hallenstein now plays the title-part with considerable power, though he rarely touches the hearts of his audience, or succeeds in concealing his art. The only scene in which he showed sufficient *abandon* was that in which the old king recognises Cordelia; here the actor produced a deep impression, being admirably supported by Frau Janisch, who spoke the tender words allotted to Cordelia.

in a tone which deeply moved the audience. Herr Baumeister played Kent with a natural warmth and kindness which were highly effective. The Stadttheater produced during the past month several new adaptations from the French, and two new German comedies. *Meine Frau und mein Vermögen*, a translation of M. Legouvé's *Ma Femme et Mon Bien*, met with little favour, the plot being rather uninteresting, and the dialogue having little of the sparkle to which our brilliant brethren on the other side of the Rhine have accustomed us. A German comedy which followed it, and which bore the suggestive title of *Heirat auf Probe* (Marriage on Trial), was not more successful, the delicate subject receiving rather rough treatment from Dr. Oscar Welten, the author of the piece. On another evening translations of four one-act French pieces were given with varying success, the *Ninette* of Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy and the *Sept Enfants* of M. Hennequin being well received, while the *Mari de la Veuve* of the elder Dumas and the *Amour de l'Art* of M. Labiche failed to interest the audience. *Mit dem Strom*, a new comedy by Fräulein Marie von Ernst, an actress of the Wiesbaden Theatre, met with less favour here than in Hamburg, where it was first given, the result being, perhaps, to some extent due to the fact that one of the leading characters was entirely misconceived by Fräulein Schendler. The other parts were well filled. At the Carl Theater, M. Lecocq's *Marjolaine* has been produced with decided success, Fräulein Horthy giving the title-part with great *verve*, while the comic parts were safe in the hands of Herren Matras and Blasel. The Meiningen company have been drawing overflowing houses at the Ringtheater.

IN ITALIAN CITIES.

IN Milan, the Pietriboni company continued their performances at the Manzoni Theatre, with success to the end of October, producing, in addition to the pieces mentioned last month, *Il Padre Prodigio*, an Italian version of the similarly-named comedy of M. Dumas fils (in which Signor Pietriboni was admirable as the old *viveur*, while Signor Rasi was an excellent representative of the severe son of that "awful dad"), and Silvestri's pleasing comedy, *Fatemi la Corte*. *Le Luthier de Crémone* of M. Coppée, effectively rendered into Martellian verse by the Marchioness Colombi should also be mentioned amongst the successes of the season. The Manzoni Theatre was subsequently occupied by the Bellotti-Bon company, the leading actress of which is now Signora Virginia Marini, who added to her familiar impersonations of the title-parts in *Fernande* and *Adrienne Lecourreur* the heroine in the *Fausses Confidences* of Marivaux. The company gave with less success the *Faux Bonshommes* of M. Barrière under the not quite equivalent Italian title of *Falsi Galantuomini*. Signor Salvini gave a few performances early in November at the Carcano Theatre, appearing with great success in Voltaire's *Zaire*, in *Othello*, and in Giacometti's *Morte Civile*. At the Teatro Milanese, Signor Ferravilla has made a great hit in a piece written by himself in the Milanese dialect, and entitled the *Class di asen*. In Rome the most noteworthy feature of the month is the extraordinary attraction exercised upon the public, high and low, by Antonietta Carrozza,

who is appearing in an equestrian performance at the Politeama Romano. It is no special skill possessed by the woman that renders her so attractive, but the fact that she has recently appeared in the dock in a sensational murder-case. To turn to performances of a kind more worthy of the attention of civilized beings, Cesare Rossi's company brought their season at the Valle Theatre to an end with such pieces as *La Ditta Fromont e Risler* (an Italian version of M. Daudet's well-known play), and Goldoni's *Bottega del Caffé*. They were succeeded early in November by the Morelli-Tessero company, which attained little success by the production of Castelnovo's new comedy, *La Prima Bugia*.

IN MADRID.

THE long vacation is at length at an end and all the principal theatres have now resumed work. The new season was inaugurated by the Teatro de la Comedia, which reopened its doors on the 21st September, with a programme consisting of two plays of Don Manuel Breton de los Herreros, one of which, *Errar la Vocacion*, has been rarely played since its first production in 1846, while the other, *Una de tantas*, is frequently performed and is familiar to most Spanish playgoers. The former piece weaves into an amusing plot a number of types of persons who have missed their vocation in life. Though not one of its author's best works, *Errar la Vocacion* is a pleasing comedy, and well-merits revival. It was admirably acted by Señores Mario, Romea, Rossell, &c., and Señoras Valverde, Tubau, and Lola Fernandez. Frequenters of the house observed with regret the absence of Señor Zamacois, and Señora Ballesteros, two deservedly popular artists, who have ceased to be members of Señor Mario's company. Early in October, the Comedia produced its first novelty in the shape of a three-act comedy, in verse, by Don Miguel Echegaray, entitled *Ni la paciencia de Job*, a monotonous piece, made up of old materials. The Teatro Español reopened on the 26th September, and, mindful of its duty as a national theatre, selected for its opening piece a rarely-acted play of Calderon, entitled *Amigo, amante y leal*, which Señor Moreno Liano had rendered suitable for stage representation by removing all that impeded the regular progress of the action, by reducing the number of changes of scene, in which Calderon indulged as freely as Shakspere, and by giving the work a more modern form. In spite of the irregularities of its construction and the improbabilities of its incidents, the old comedy was well received by the audience. The chief honours of the performance fell to Don Rafael Calvo. The success of the performance induced the manager to select Calderon's comedy, *En esta vida todo es verdad y todo es mentira*, adapted to the modern stage by Señores Canete and Campo-Arana, and produced on the 4th October with still greater success, Señor Calvo and Señor Vico lending special interest to the revival. The Teatro de Apolo opened the season with the well-known *Niña Boba*, of Lope de Vega, in which Señora Hijosa made a triumphant *rentrée* in the title-part, while the minor character of Inés introduced for the first time to a Madrid audience, Señorita Abril, a young actress of charming appearance and of marked ability. In a new comedy by Don José Estremera, *Tentar al Diablo*, the new comer confirmed the favourable impression produced by her first appearance.

Echoes from the Green-Room.

AFTER singing at Paris Madame Patti went to Berlin, where she appeared in the first week of November. From Berlin she goes to Dresden, Munich, and Vienna. In the last-mentioned city she gives twelve performances before the end of January. The Marquis de Caux is taking steps to prevent her appearance at the Gaîté in Paris next March.

IT was over a pleasant supper at the Garrick Club that Mr. Irving consented to play for the benefit of Mr. Belford. It having been mentioned that the latter was unable to pursue his vocation any longer, it was immediately proposed to organize a performance on his behalf, and at the suggestion of Mr. Charles Dickens Mr. Irving agreed to re-appear on the occasion as Digby Grant in the *Two Roses*. The performance is fixed for the 12th December.

M. VICTOR HUGO has deprived the Parisians of the pleasure of hearing Signor Verdi's *Rigoletto*. He has sent word to the manager of the Théâtre Lyrique, who was about to produce the opera, that he will not allow the musical adaptation of his drama to be played in France.

THE *Dame aux Camélias* will shortly be put in rehearsal at the Comédie Française. The cast has already been given. The play, by the way, was not brought out without difficulty. The censor (?) was long opposed to it, and Madame Fargueil, for whom it was written, threw up the part of Marguerite because, as she said, "la pièce se passe dans un monde que je ne connais pas." "A votre âge, alors, mademoiselle," the author said to her, in a well-feigned tone of commiseration, "vous ne le connaitrez jamais."

MADAME NILSSON left London for Madrid last month, to sing for twelve nights during the marriage festivities of King Alfonzo in Madrid. For this engagement she receives £3,600.

M. ALEXANDER DUMAS, we are informed, has reconsidered his determination not to write for the stage again. He is engaged upon a comedy in which a nineteenth century Tartuffe is to appear.

MR. LONGFELLOW is turning the story of *Miles Standish* into a play.

M. SARDOU'S new comedy, *Daniel Rochat*, is in rehearsal at the Comédie Française. The story turns upon a contest between infidelity and faith.

MDLLE. BERNHARDT has nearly finished "The Bouffon," one of the groups she is executing for the Prince of Wales. The pictures she has painted for him do not satisfy her, and she is now studying under Mr. Alfred Stevens. During his recent visit to Paris the Prince called upon her. "I shall soon be able," she said, "to send you two pictures a hundred times better than these."

DR. REID has, in connection with the Cambridge Local Examinations, delivered several lectures on *The Merchant of Venice*. He says that he agrees with the views propounded by Mr. Frederick Hawkins in the November number of *The Theatre* as to the character of Shylock, and that a copy of that article has been placed in the hands of every candidate.

THE Comédie Française is about to take from the Odéon M. Theuriet's *Jean Marie*, in which Mdlle. Bernhardt will reappear in the character created by her at the latter theatre.

MR. JOHN LEE, Edmund Kean's private secretary, lately came over from Jersey, where he has long resided, to see *The Iron Chest* at the Lyceum. He afterwards

had an interview with Mr. Irving, to whom he spoke of the points made by Kean as Sir Edward Mortimer. Mr. Lee has just completed his eighty-fourth year, having been born October 25th, 1795. He made his first appearance in London as Laertes at Drury Lane, in 1828, Young playing Hamlet. Miss Fanny Kelly, the Ophelia, and Mr. Benjamin Webster, the Rosenerantz, are, besides himself, the only survivors of the east.

THIS month Herr Wagner will go for the winter to a villa he has rented at Naples. He has some thoughts of composing a new opera.

MADAME TREBELLi, after singing at a concert in Copenhagen, a few weeks ago, was presented by the King of Denmark with a diamond crown. Her Scandinavian tour has been most successful.

M. SARDOU is about to write a comedy for the Vaudeville, and, in conjunction with M. Claretie, an historical drama.

M. TAILLADE is about to appear on the London stage.

MISS ADA CAVENDISH appeared at San Francisco in October as Lady Clancarty, and was warmly received. The Lady Betty was Miss Adeline Stanhope.

SIGNOR SALVINI plays in Vienna this month.

HER American tour completed, Miss Neilson will take a residence in the South of France, a part of the world which she deems—not entirely without reason—superior to any other. She plays Juliet in Paris next October.

MR. W. S. GILBERT is writing a new comedy for Mr. Sothern.

MADAME CARLOTTA PATTI states that unless something unforeseen should happen her present tour will be her last.

A NEW comedy by Mr. Byron, *The Upper Crust*, will be brought out this month at the Folly Theatre.

M. DUQUESNEL is about to give up the management of the Odéon, and will be succeeded by M. Paul Meurice. In that case we may expect to see M. Hugo's *Torquemada* and *Cromwell* produced there.

AN unpublished stringed quartet by Mendelssohn will shortly be issued by Herr Erler, of Berlin.

M. JULES VERNE has been yachting in Scotland.

MR. DION BOUCICAULT has been sick for some weeks, and his many friends will be sorry to hear that his physicians now pronounce the symptoms those of incipient paralysis, the result of overwork and anxiety.

THE agreeable "Wednesday nights" at the Green Room Club were re-commenced on the 5th ult., the Hon. Lewis Wingfield taking the chair.

THE Paris *Figaro* has started a brilliant idea for advertising itself and accommodating the public. It is establishing telephonic communication with all the theatres in Paris, so that you can call in at the *Figaro's* Salle des Dépêches and engage your seat at the Odéon, for instance, without wasting two hours in crossing the water and perhaps finding that there are no seats after all.

THE Dramatic Reform Association in Manchester has done some useful work. It states that it had succeeded in stopping the performance of an objectionable opéra bouffe at a metropolitan theatre, has caused certain features in a spectacular play at another London theatre to be eliminated, and has under consideration a draft scheme for a dramatic training-school.

THE Drama formed the subject of a sermon preached by Dr. Laird Collier in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute a few weeks ago. "To see Mr. Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle," he said, "is a means of grace; it's better than a prayer meeting."

M. VAUCORBEIL continues to break with cherished opera traditions. In the ballet *divertissement* of the third act of *Der Freyschütz*, the *Invitation à la valse*

has hitherto been given as an *andante*, although Weber marked it *allegro*. The movement is now treated in conformity with the original score, and the innovation has been generally accepted.

DR. WESTLAND MARSTON is the author of the article in the *New Quarterly Magazine* on "Realism in Dramatic Art."

THE tombs of Beethoven, Mozart, Gluck, and Haydn, in the Vienna Friedhof, are to be covered with flowers throughout the year at the expense of the city, and kept in repair so long as Vienna is in existence.

THE *New York Star* says that Mr. Dion Boucicault was waiting eagerly in his box for a call after *Contempt of Court*, which call did not come. The *New York Times* says he was called and made a speech. Neither statement is true.

M. LÉON HALÉVY'S *Martin Luther*, soon to be produced at the Théâtre des Nations, Paris, is an entire novelty, although it was received at the Théâtre-Français as far back as 1832. Two years after that, however, the author published it, upon which Baron Taylor declared that he could not produce a piece which had been printed. No manager has since had the courage to accept it.

CRITICS cannot express their meaning too clearly. Mr. John McCullough lately played in Indianapolis, and the *Sentinel* said of him, "He is as near perfection in *Hamlet* as in *Virginius*, and that is saying a great deal." Was this intended as a sarcasm?

M. CHARLES GARNIER has sent to M. Jules Ferry a long report as to the alterations that may be effected in the *salle* of the Opéra. This is how he puts it: "Ordre des opérations qui pourraient se faire successivement pour améliorer l'acoustique de la salle, en supposant que celle-ci soit mauvaise : 1° *Ne rien faire du tout.*"

THE manager of the Châtelet has been to London for a fortnight to study life in Whitechapel, where the scene of M. Claretie's drama, *Le Clown*, to be played at the Châtelet next September, is laid.

MR. WHISTLER once painted a portrait of Mr. Irving; but the more the artist painted the less like the actor did it become.

A FRENCH provincial playbill announces that "the rôles of thieves will be played by amateurs of the town."

GENERAL GRANT was much delighted with his first view of *Pinafore* in the far West recently and snored his approval in a private box throughout the performance. Yet the firing of guns would not disturb the General while he sat in his library half so much as the sound of a piano.

AN irrepressible aspirant to dramatic honours recently left a MS. with a Parisian manager. Soon afterwards it was returned to him—rejected. "What I am particularly savage about," he said to a friend, "is that they have read only the first act." "How do you know that?" "Because the other three are not yet written. I have had too many pieces rejected not to spare myself unnecessary trouble."

THEY were out sailing on the Atlantic City Inlet. The captain, as he spied the buoy, cried "Hard-a-lee!" and one of the party, by force of habit—it was not intentional—murmured, "Ever!" There was a splash—gone!

IN a performance of *L'Assommoir*, at Baldwin's, San Francisco, as Miss Rose Coghlan tossed the bucketful of water over Miss Lillian Andrews in the lavatory scene, the latter "ducked," and the orchestra leader was surprised and perhaps delighted with a warm bath.

"I KNOW not," Henry Ward Beecher once affectedly remarked in the hearing of Mr. Gilbert, "which of the two raises man the higher, genius or gentleness." The dramatist was of opinion that an enraged bull "might be safely backed to do more than either."

MR. HOLLINGSHEAD will shortly become the manager of the Olympic.

MR. JOSEPH HATTON has made a great success in readings from his own works, and will shortly visit America, *à la Dickens*.

THE last portraits of Mr. Buckstone were taken by Mr. Charles Watkins, of Torriano Avenue.

Aïda, *Hamlet*, *Faust*, and *La Juive* are in rehearsal at the Paris Opéra, the second for the *début* of M. Dubulée, the third for that of Mdlle. Janvier, and the fourth for Miss Jenny Howe.

Les Lionnes Pauvres is to be revived at the Théâtre du Vaudeville.

MR. CHARLES READE and M. Busnach are adapting *It is Never Too Late to Mend* for the Ambigu.

Alsace, a piece in five acts, by MM. Erckmann-Chatrian, will be produced at the Ambigu after *Le Chevalier de la Morlière*.

M. OFFENBACH's new opera, *La Fille du Tambour*, now in preparation at the Folies Dramatiques, is similar in plot to *La Fille du Régiment*, but abounds in original and charming melodies.

M. LECOCQ's *Fleur de Thé* is to be revived at the Bouffes.

M. PLANQUETTE's next comic opera will be called *Le Régiment Qui Passe*, and will be produced at the Folies Dramatiques.

JOHANN STRAUSS' new opera, *Le Prince Orlowsky*, is nearly completed.

THE new Residenz Theater at Hanover has been opened.

HERR GOLDMARK is about composing a new opera with an Italian libretto.

THE *New Magdalen* has been played in Portuguese at the theatre of D. Maria II., Lisbon.

AMERICAN admirers of historical drama may take courage. Mr. Edgar Fawcett has completed a poetic drama, in blank verse, on the historic episode of Arnold and André. The leading part, that of Arnold's wife, is for Miss Clara Morris.

An Arabian Night is the title of Mr. Daly's next piece.

THE American right of *Crutch and Toothpick* now belongs to Mr. Abbey, of the New York Park Theatre.

HERR BODENSTEDT, the translator of Shakespeare into German, has arrived at New York with Herr Neville Moritz, the tragedian.

THE youngest daughter of General Banks having been successful in private theatricals in Brookline, a suburb of Boston, desires to go upon the boards. It is said that her father was once on the stage but failed.

THEATRE-GOERS in New York are missing the trim little figure and good-humoured face of William H. Powell, the artist whose death has just been announced. Mr. Powell was a favourite with actors and singers, and his receptions were artistic centres of society for many years. The death of his wife broke up these reunions; but Mr. Powell was a constant first-nighter.

MR. GEORGE MACDONALD, the novelist, having abandoned the Church, will appear with his family this winter in New York in his dramatized version of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

The Girls has been played with marked success at San Francisco. "The first two acts," says the *Chronicle*, "are as good as anything Mr. Byron has done in situation and dialogue."

MR. JOHN E. OWENS has proceeded to Australia on a tour around the world.

ONE of Miss Annie Louise Cary's home-neighbours in Maine says:—"Annie's jest the girl she used to be. She don't wear none of her fine dresses when she comes back, nor her flashin' diamonds either. She's jest as natural as natur, and don't put on no airs. She jest comes into the old church and pipes up, and knows everybody, jest as she did when she was a school-gal." All of which is very satisfactory.

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